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BEN - ONIE.

EPISODES FROM THE JOURNAL

OF AN

ISRAELITE, CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY.

BY

REV. LEWIS DE LEW, D. D.; L. L. D.

PREFACED BY

REV. CAMPBELL FAIR, D. D.

(Rector of St. Mark's, Grand Rapids, Mich.)

"Quamquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit, incipiam."—VIRGIL

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PREFACE.

The story of BEN-ONIE, as told in the following pages, is the experience of a fearless soul, working its way through the types of Judaism, into the realities of Christianity; the breaking loose from the traditions of the Talmud and the exclusiveness of the Rabbis, to live in the liberty of Christ's Kingdom and enjoy the fullness of its true Catholicity.

BEN-ONIE's history is told with such force and pathos, that the author's own words are the best interpretations of what is taught in this interesting volume. The struggles through which BEN-ONIE passed, the conflicts he endured, the oppositions with which he was assailed, the love with which he was helped, the strength by which he was supported, the teaching wherewith he was guided, and the strong, brave and dauntless courage by which, eventually, he came out victorious, "Clinging to the Cross" and "Baptized into Christ," are all told with a vigor, a freshness and a reality which prove how black must have been the darkness, how soul-deep must have been the traditions, how hard must have been the struggles, how fascinating must have been the love of friends, how bitter the hatred of enemies, and how real must have been the Grace from Heaven which taught and led God's child on earth.

Is there not a volume written in one short sentence on page 74 when the Author tells his readers that BEN ONIE "had lost faith in Judaism and gained but little light in Christianity?" Herein indeed we have the history of many a life expressed in this one sentence of our book.

What agony of soul must BEN-ONIE have suffered, bursting from the trammels of his birth-Judaism, he was fast approaching the regenerating life soon to be given him from Jesus of Nazareth, when one "dark and stormy night..... prostrated in the field under a large chestnut tree.....he prays:

"Merciful Father, leave me, ah leave me not forever separated from Thee! O Thou tremendous One, Jehovah-God, let, O let, the morning star, once more shine on my solitary path! It is dark, dark around me. Show me once more Thy friendly countenance. Light! O my God, light! Leave not thy child in the dark shadow of death!"

IV

The God of Abraham heard the prayer of BEN-ONIE! Beautifully are we told in this book, God's Providence for man's guidance, illustrated in BEN-ONIE ceasing to fear the condemnation of Sinai, when he accepted the justification of Calvary—the Law was satisfied when the Gospel was believed.

The arguments of the Jew and the reasons of the Christian are expressed with such simple clearness that this part of the volume, particularly from page 135, will make it a valuable and standard work on the "Jewish Controversy." The author has not attempted to exhaust the subject, and we are equally sure he does not "rest his case" upon *any* one of BEN-ONIE's replies to the captious R. JOSEPH, the tender R. BARUCH, or the thoughtful R. AKIBA; but the conversations so courteously held and graphically described, will be suggestively instructive for the general reader and Theological student, while as a "Guide" or "Hand-Book" in Mission Work among Jews, this book, "BEN-ONIE," ought to be hailed as reasoning with the Jew in print, even as the missionary argues with the Jew in person.

When BEN-ONIE's history has been read, as given in these pages, the reader will have learned, among many other points, these leading truths:

First: How gradual is the development of Faith in that soul which has to break through barriers, overcome prejudices, cast off associations, reject a lifelong belief, and adopt what before was opposed; yet, no matter what the difficulties may be, if the soul sincerely seeks and pants for the Saviour, assuredly Jesus of Nazareth shall be found. St. Luke groped his way through the darkness of Paganism, into the mist of the Proselyte, eventually to live in the full light of Christian Truth as Missionary, Evangelist, and Saint in Paradise. BEN-ONIE's mind gradually opened from being that of a Jewish boy and a Jewish Rabbi, to the full vigor of a Christian minister. The story of such a change must be one of mystery and instruction. These pages give it.

Secondly: The reader will learn how heart-piercing are the difficulties which beset and retard the conversion of an Israelite to Christianity. It is very easy for us to speak of Judaism as Prophetic Christianity, and to describe Christianity as fulfilled Judaism—but to "cross over," as the Converted Israelite must, is a leap which cannot be taken in the dark. It may be, however, that the Doctrinal and Theological difficulties are not so hazardous as are the Social and National—Jew and Gentile obstruct and persecute the Christian Israelite. The Jew never forgives him for having become a Christian, the Christian never trusts him for having been a Jew! BEN-ONIE in this book, and BEN-ONIE in life's sad reality, are no exceptions to what befell the Israelite who becomes a Christian!

V

Thirdly: "BEN-ONIE" is a striking proof, if proof be needed, of the Church's duty to propagate the Gospel amongst the Tribes of Israel.

The Church has such a Society. God speed its efforts, and God bless its agency! May its leaders be wise, its managers kind and its missionaries active. Let us not doubt the conversion of Israel. Let us work for the evangelization of the Israelite; but let us labor with the right men and in the right spirit. No acre in the missionary field requires such solid learning, such wise adaptability, such broad and Catholic men to till it, as that on which the Israelite lives, and in which his prejudices are rooted. The study of the following pages will not be without profit to every Jewish missionary, and to all whose "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved."

The instructive notes throughout this book will enhance its value, and open up for many readers a mine of research, as yet but poorly explored by even the most comprehensive reader.

While we read the story of BEN-ONIE's struggles and BEN-ONIE's triumphs, let us not doubt the truth of what we read; this book is not a novel of fiction—it is, I believe, the history of the Author!—my dear, and honored, and learned friend, the Rev. LEWIS DE LEW, D. D.

It would have been a delightful task to have made this Preface, asked for by the Author, a Review of the work, when, as a friend I could praise, and as a critic eulogize, but reviews come after publication, the Preface before.

As BEN-ONIE has not yet gone forth to the uncertain public, I merely write this as an advertisement, announcing the Book—a very small vestibule to the large Mansion into which the reader is now invited to enter.

ST. MARK'S RECTORY, CAMPBELL FAIR.

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BEN-ONIE'S FAREWELL.

CHAPTER I.

"Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again;
I have a faint, cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life."

In the afternoon of the sixth day of the week, and of the month Tishri,⁽¹⁾ 1857, Rabbi BARUCH addressed himself to NAOMI, his wife, who was busily engaged in making preparations for the Sabbath: "Dearest NAOMI," said he, "it is the wish of my heart that the approaching day of the Sabbath be solemnized with uncommon festivities. Above all take good care that the Sabbath-lamp gives an unusually bright light. Add two candles to it. Thou knowest the maxim of the Ancients:—peace be upon them—'Where there is light there is joy.' In fact, let everything be as perfect as possible; for it is the last Sabbath which our first-born son, our dear BEN-ONIE, expects to celebrate with us. We shall devote this holy Sabbath as a tender farewell for, and a special token of our heartfelt love towards him."

NAOMI looked at her husband and sighed heavily.

(1) Tishri is the Hebrew name of the seventh month, corresponding with our October.

"Why dost thou not answer, and why art thou so disquieted, NAOMI? Art thou not happy that BEN-ONIE is able to fill a position to which he is called?"

"Certainly," replied NAOMI, "I do rejoice and am thankful that our son is able to teach children in the religion of our Fathers, and that he is about to make his first step in the way which leads to heavenly glory. But BEN-ONIE is very young and, without doubt, inexperienced."

"It is true," remarked R. BARUCH, "BEN-ONIE is young, scarcely 18 years of age. However, we are told that our son will be well cared for in all things by those who have called him. And, beside, thou dost surely know that it is the God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB, who has commanded BEN-ONIE: 'Go thee from thy kindred, and from thy father's house into a land that I will show thee.' God grant, that he, like our father ABRAHAM, be called a 'friend of the Most High!'" And casting his eyes unto heaven, he exclaimed: "Thou knowest, O God, that this is the wish of my heart!"

NAOMI, it would seem, could not very well share in the joyful anticipations of her husband. After a little while she said: "May the Holy One—blessed be He—hear the wish of thy heart," and sighed deeply.

Rabbi BARUCH, a little alarmed about NAOMI's strange action, asked somewhat significantly: "NAOMI, is there any doubt in your mind as to BEN-ONIE's true piety?"

"No, my dear BARUCH," resumed NAOMI earnestly, "I doubt not our son's true piety; but

thou knowest that, for several years, his principal conversation has been among Christians. Of course, I know, the character of his studies required this; but, even apart from this, he seemed to enjoy their company rather than that of Israelites. He has, it is true, great respect and warm love for the Law of Moses, but as for the Talmud and the Rabbis, in regard to them, I have heard him sometimes express himself in a way which, I thought, was not altogether becoming in one who is preparing for the Rabbinical office. And thou knowest how R. LEVI oftentimes exhorted us, both in sermons and in private conversation, to pay more attention to the institutions of the Rabbis than to those of Moses."

R. BARUCH who, either, did not listen carefully enough to NAOMI's objections, or, perhaps did not deem them weighty enough to take them into consideration, tried his best to calm his wife's fears and, remonstrating, reminded her that it is not permitted by the Talmud to be gloomy on the Sabbath day. The mentioning of the Talmud produced the desired effect. For NAOMI looked upon the Talmud as the incarnation of divine authority. She wiped away her tears and devoted all her energy to the preparation of the Sabbath. R. BARUCH left the room, and, going to his own apartment, made the necessary arrangements for visiting the Synagogue.⁽¹⁾

The clock struck the hour of five. It was

(1) The Jewish Sabbath commences on Friday evening, between four and seven, according to the season of the year.

the appointed time of Sabbath and public worship. NAOMI called her eldest daughter, a maiden of about fifteen summers, requested her to light the Sabbath-lamp and to prepare the supper-table. This being done, R. BARUCH with his eldest sons entered, and announced that they were ready to repair to the Synagogue.

"Laek le-shalohm,"⁽¹⁾ solemnly replied NAOMI and her daughter, accompanying them to the door.

With his prayer-book in his hand, the Rabbi, followed by his sons, went to the temple to pray for a Sabbath-blessing upon wife and children, and specially upon BEN-ONIE. For, although he was somewhat proud of his son, yet he was not altogether without anxiety. And when he stood before Jehovah to lay down at His feet the prayers of his heart, R. BARUCH could not control his tears. And why should he? NAOMI did not see him now. In his Father's house he could give vent to the emotions of his soul. And he did accordingly. Having unburdened his oppressed heart in the Synagogue, he could be calm at home. Consequently, when R. BARUCH had returned from the house of prayer, he resumed his usual tranquillity. No one noticed that, a few minutes before, he had shed tears.

When the Rabbi and his sons had entered the room, NAOMI and her daughters arose and saluted him reverently, saying: "Good Sabbath to you?" According to Jewish custom, the children, with bowed heads, approached their

(1) "Go in peace." A common salutation among pious Jews.

father, over which he, and subsequently his wife, pronounced the usual benediction.⁽¹⁾ This being finished, R. BARUCH saluted and dismissed the angels which had accompanied him from the Synagogue to his house;⁽²⁾ then seated himself at the table, blessed the cup, broke the bread and, with his family, partook of the Sabbath-supper, which was prepared with extraordinary care.⁽³⁾

While the family enjoyed the supper, little or nothing was said. But before thanks was returned, R. BARUCH addressed himself to BEN-ONIE thus:

"My dear son, before another Sabbath will have dawned, your place at the table will be empty. A week from this day you will be far from home. Were not I and your mother convinced that your departure would be for your own benefit, we certainly would not permit your leaving us. You remember, no doubt, the Talmudic maxim: "Woe to those children, who are compelled to spread their feet beneath the table of strangers."⁽⁴⁾ The nature of your vocation does not permit you to remain always at home. On the contrary, your calling will

(1) To males: "God make thee like Ephraim and Manasseh." To females: "God make thee like Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel."

(2) The respectful salutation to every Jewish husband, who returns from the Synagogue, is also with a view to the "three angels" who, according to the Talmud, "accompany him" and whom he addresses in Hebrew:

"Welcome to you, O angels of peace, O angels of the Most High, of the King of Kings, the Holy one—blessed be He!"

"Enter in peace, O angels of peace," etc.

"Bless me in peace, O angels of peace," etc.

"Depart in peace, O angels of peace," etc.

This beautiful ode, in which wife and children heartily join, is always sung.

(3) According to the Talmud, an Israelite is compelled to eat three good meals on the Sabbath the first on Friday evening, the second and third on Saturday morning and at noon. Obedience to this rule, entitles any Jew to a portion in the life to come.

(4) אוֹי לְבָנִים שְׂגוּרֵי מַעַל שֶׁלֹּחַן אֲבִיהֶם

be, as a rule, far away. And the sooner you commence, the better for your own welfare. Thus far your studies have been theoretical—they must now be practical. And for this purpose you must enter into public life. And let me at once tell you, that the study of the latter is far more difficult than that of the former. In books you read simply what you see; in the book of daily life, however, you must oftentimes read otherwise than as you see. In other words, you will experience that the world is different from what you expected. See, my son, it is this to which I call your attention, in order that you may not deceive yourself.

“And in the second place let me warn you against temptations which will soon beset you from all sides. These are the dangers that, more than anything else, fill your mother’s heart as well as mine with anxiety. You are yet young and, if the fear of Jehovah does not prevent it, you will not be able to defy them all and at all times. Therefore, my dear child, be always wide awake. Do as it becomes a dutiful son. Be always a good Israelite. Walk in the footsteps of our forefathers—peace be upon them! Pay due respect to the precepts of the Talmud, and forget not that he who begins to disregard the Oral law, will eventually finish with neglecting the Written law.⁽¹⁾ Remember, child, that your parents will not cease to pray for you day, nor night. To the God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB we commend you. May His angels always watch over you.”

(1) The one is the Talmud, the other the Law of Moses.

Under similar expressions of good will and wholesome advice, the Sabbath soon passed by. The two following days were spent in preparation for BEN-ONIE's departure. Soon that moment came. Early in the morning of the third day of the week, (Tuesday) a carriage stood before the residence of R. BARUCH. When all arrangements were completed, BEN-ONIE embraced his brothers and sisters and, together with his parents, entered the carriage. They accompanied him as far as Amsterdam.

BEN-ONIE left home with a mixed feeling of joy and sorrow. It is true, he shed tears when he left the parental dwelling; yet on the other hand he felt somewhat as all young men feel, who are leaving home to care for themselves. Together with home, we leave behind the troublesome admonitions and exhortations of parents and we imagine that we are completely free. We fancy that we are at liberty to do as we please. Moreover, strangers are apt to look upon us as men, they treat us with deference. Thus we fancy.

Idle dream! Do you then really believe that the world is one family where people live together in unity? Poor young men who do not know that, whereas parents are anxious to hide your mistakes, strangers will rather expose them! What is the use of building castles in the air? They are soap-bubbles, which disappear almost at the same moment they come into existence. Many a young man has seen his castles in the air tumble down,

before he had finished building them. Verily, I say unto you, your parents are your true guardians, who will protect you with absolute, unselfish love, even at the peril of their own lives! They are your best and most reliable guides on the uncertain waves of the ocean of this life!

INTRODUCTION

TO

BEN-ONIE'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER II.

In a little town, not far from the spot where Holland's noblest stream flows swiftly and majestically into the North Sea, we notice the residence of Rabbi BARUCH. It was a handsome and comfortable house, though scarcely large enough for his family, which consisted of himself, his wife, seven children, two near relatives, a tutor and the usual number of domestics. Although living in the Netherlands, yet R. BARUCH was not a Hollander. His father, Don LUIS BELMONTE DEL L., was banished from Spain in 1795, because he was a Jew, though outwardly he had, in order to be allowed to remain in his own country where his ancestors had settled and flourished long before the Christian era,⁽¹⁾ professed, or rather feigned to be a Roman Catholic. Don LUIS had a subterraneous Synagogue, where he and his Jewish brethren, who were, like himself,

(1) It is a well known fact that a great number of Jews lived in Spain before the birth of Christ. There exists a letter which, according to the Spanish Jews, must have been written by the Spanish Sanhedrin to Rabbi JOSEPH BEN CAJAPHA, (CAJAPHAS) admonishing him to be very careful in regard to JESUS OF NAZARETH. Hence those Jews, among them R. BARUCH, most emphatically assert that they had no part, whatever, in the crucifixion of our Lord.

While I am sorry to say that, according to critics, this letter is spurious, yet the fact remains that the Spanish Jews, so unlike the Polish, evidently condemn the action of the Supreme Council of Palestine.

members of the Roman church pro forma, secretly congregated on the seventh day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath, to worship the God of Israel according to Jewish custom. Of this the Spanish government was duly informed, which promptly condemned him, confiscated his real estate and banished him, and his four year old son, from Spanish jurisdiction forever. Don LUIS then went to the Netherlands, the Dominion of WILLIAM OF ORANGE. It was well known that in that country the Jewish exiles were, to say the least, safe from senseless, arrogant and fanatic intolerance. When, however, he arrived at Utrecht, the capital of the province of that name, a city celebrated on account of its grand university, with the purpose of settling there, he was plainly told that "in Utrecht there was no room for a Jew."⁽¹⁾ Being very unfavorably impressed against Protestantism, fancying as he did that it was hardly more tolerant towards the Israelites than Catholicism, he took his little child and settled in a small, but pretty village, only three miles distant from Utrecht. There the Don spent the residue of his life, condemning the bigotry of that church which had robbed him of his property, and bewailing the fanaticism of that church, the protection of which he had implored, but which, instead of granting it, had insulted, and expelled him. Don LUIS tenderly cared for his child. For it he lived. It was all he possessed on earth. BARUCH—thus was the name of Don LUIS' child—grew up, developed

(1) Utrecht was in those days a Protestant city.

gradually, went successfully through school, college and university, and finally settled as a physician at the age of 30 in one of the small towns of the Province of South-Holland, where he obtained an honorable name as man and citizen, as a token of which, he was thrice elected Alderman and appointed by his Monarch as Justice of the Peace.

Five years later Doctor BARUCH MAURICIUS DEL L. married a Jewish lady, who proved to be not only a true and loving wife, but also "a fruitful vine." She presented her husband with seven "olive-branches." They were, as he often was accustomed to say, "seven pearls in his parental crown."

Dr. BARUCH was an excellent man and, like most Spaniards, of a grave nature. He was noted as a kind and good physician. He practiced, both, among the rich and the poor; but he made the former pay for the latter. Hence the poor people loved his presence, but the wealthy class avoided it as much as was practicable. He was a good Israelite, conscientiously doing his duty as such, visiting the Synagogue punctually. Being the most respectable among the Jews in the town, he saw himself soon elevated to the dignity of Parnas,⁽¹⁾ and, after having discharged the duties of this office for more than 15 years, the Chief-Rabbi of his district conferred upon him the dignifying title of Rabbi.

NAOMI, Rabbi BARUCH's wife, was of English birth; a rather plain but truly noble woman; kind-hearted and charitably disposed towards

(1) Warden or Elder.

everyone. She made no pretensions as to literary attainments, but substituted for them a motherly love for her children and a watchful care over her domestic duties, such as is rarely equalled, never excelled. NAOMI was a strict Jewess and like nearly all Jewish women if they possess any religion at all, a devotee of Rabbinical institutions. Of the Law of Moses—it must be admitted—she knew precious little; of the Prophets nothing at all. Hence her superstitious belief, ideas and principles. Though naturally inclined to be kind and good towards everyone, regardless of creed or country, yet her strong proclivities towards the Talmud and other Rabbinical doctrines caused her—and how could it be otherwise?—to be far more intolerant towards non-Israelites than her husband, who—to tell the truth—sometimes seriously doubted the infallibility of the “Chackamim.”⁽¹⁾

Among the Jews the woman, as a rule, excels the man in superstition. This, however, is the result of her religious education. According to the Talmud a Jewess is not permitted to study the Law of Moses, because “she lacks sufficient understanding;” hence “she would twist the word of God.” To avoid this, the Rabbanim⁽²⁾ have concluded that “he, who instructs his daughter in the Law, is equally guilty as though he teaches her vanity.”

Thus we read in the Gemara :⁽³⁾

“There are ten sorts of incapacibilities, and he

(1) “The wise;” authors of the Talmud.

(2) Plural of Rabbi, or Rabban; the former means my master, the latter, master, without pronoun.

(3) Talmud ; tract. Hillehot Eduth IX: 1.

“who is afflicted with one of them is considered unable to bear testimony to the truth, to-wit: Women, slaves, children, imbeciles, the deaf, the blind, evil-doers, suspected persons, relatives and such as are interested in the case.”

No wonder, therefore, that every pious Jew in his daily morning-devotions, privately as well as publicly, and not without self-gratification exclaims: “Blessed art Thou, O Eternal our God, King of the Universe, that Thou hast not created me a woman!”⁽¹⁾

The corresponding prayer for the woman is as humble as it is touching: “Blessed art Thou, O Eternal our God, King of the Universe, who hast made me according to Thy will!”⁽²⁾

Of course, there is not much otherwise left for the poor woman to say!

Among the orthodox and devout Jews the commendable practice, of setting apart the first-born son for the service of the Synagogue, is yet more or less kept up. Rabbi BARUCH and NAOMI respected it. As his eldest son, BEN-ONIE, was an answer to earnest prayer, NAOMI had vowed a vow, her husband concurring, that her Bechor,⁽³⁾ being a male, should be educated for the Rabbinical office. Indeed, this was NAOMI's highest ambition. This she considered the climax of all her happiness. She knew of no greater honor on earth, of no more complete salvation in Heaven. Early, therefore, R. BARUCH made the necessary arrangements to instruct his son in the Jewish

(1) שלא עשני אשה

(2) שעשני כרצוני

(3) The first born.

religion. The most practical way seemed to him to engage a private tutor. A gentleman, by the name of SHALEM K. applied for the position and, at the age of three years, BEN-ONIE was, either, so fortunate, or so unfortunate, as to be entrusted to the care of a private tutor.

Mr. SHALEM K. continued to be BEN-ONIE'S tutor for fully five years. It must be, however, admitted that the choice of R BARUCH, in selecting Mr. K. as his child's tutor, was not a happy one. On the contrary, it was a misfortune. He possessed neither learning nor talent, neither tact nor sympathy, neither kindness nor love. He was a Pharisee according to the historical and common sense of the word. The study of the Talmud was his sole delight. He was really a bigot of the first rank, so much so, indeed, that, at first, his fanaticism displeased even NAOMI! Becoming, however, more and more accustomed to his religious and ecclesiastical doctrines and interpretations, she soon became reconciled to his absurd ceremonies, intolerable opinions and ideas. What influence this man had on BEN-ONIE'S youthful heart appears from his own statements in his journal. More than once he expressed his surprise that his wise father and tender-loving mother could have made such a tremendous mistake, as to trust their child into the hands of a man who proved himself totally unfit for such a position. Fortunately, however, he departed before he had an opportunity to poison the mind of his pupil. He went to the city of Delft where he, soon tired of teaching, engaged in business.

Mr. LEVI H. of the city of Gouda became

his successor. He was quite a different man. Being well educated at home and thoroughly instructed at college and seminary, he was better calculated to be of some use to BEN-ONIE. As for his religious standpoint he, too, was a Pharisee; but a little more tolerant, more highly cultured and more tender-hearted. Like his predecessor he was also five years BEN-ONIE's teacher. His principal duty was to prepare his pupil for college and seminary. And herein he succeeded well; for Mr. H. was an excellent tutor and a good Talmudist. He taught BEN-ONIE the Hebrew language and literature. Specially did he pay much attention to the Mishna and Gemara⁽¹⁾ And when

(1) Gemara (pronounce a as in are) is the name of the voluminous collection of Rabbinical explanations on, nearly, every branch of science and knowledge, of theology and religion, political economy, and social question. This is called the Mishna and the Gemaras. The former is edited by Rabbi JEHUDA HAKKADOSH (the Saint), Prince of the Synagogue A. D. 190, and consists of six large folios, called Mishna, or Second Law (Oral Law); and the latter called, Gemara, or Perfection, is the exegesis on the Mishna, as well as on all other writing, the Old Testament inclusive, i. e. consisting of about sixty folios, which are known as the Gemara Hierosolyma (Jerusalem), finished at the end of the third century, and the Gemara Babylona (called THE Talmud) finished at the beginning of the sixth century.

It is asserted by the Rabbis that Moses received this Oral Law from God, during the forty days he was on Sinai! He must have delivered it to JOSHUA; he to the "Ancients;" (זקנים) and those to the "Heads of the Grand Synagogue." (אנשי כנסת הגדולה). Rabbi AKIBA, the celebrated and unfortunately deceived herald of Bar-Cochbah, one of the most notorious among the pseudo-Christ's (of whom there were about sixty!) in the course of the first century, is said to have already conceived the idea of committing the Oral Law to writing, with an eye to its preservation.

The entire collection, generally called Talmud, is, taken as a whole, a work of nonsense, showing now and then traces of deep sense;—a work of puerile hair-splittings—and of profound metaphysical reasonings;—full of childish stories and absurd ideas—and yet, here and there, of expressions, similitudes and parables, which more than once, remind us of Scriptural language. The Talmud is a cesspool of absurdities, among which is hidden many a pearl of Oriental wisdom. It is a monument of pungeny, of knowledge, even of genius spent upon worthless trifles. If ever there has been a work, which expressed absolutely the character, as well as the condition of its authors, it is the Talmud in contra-distinction to the Bible: the Bible given to, given by the Israel of God in their grand and glorious state—the Talmud composed by Israel in their dispersion, their misery and their decline.

BEN-ONIE had reached his fourteenth year he possessed a great deal of Talmudic knowledge. It seems almost impossible and yet it is true that, already at that age, BEN-ONIE read with great facility the philosophical works of MAIMONIDES⁽¹⁾ and also the grammatical works of

(1) No one will consider it superfluous to have in these pages a short biography of one of the most able, talented and celebrated Rabbis.

MAIMONIDES, or Rabbi MOSES BEN MAIMON, (by way of abbreviation called RAMBAM) known among the Arabs as ABU AMRAM MUSA AL ISRAELI AL CORTABI was born at Cordua in 1139. His parents belonged to the upper-class. Already excelling as a child, he soon gave evidence that no study was too severe, no labor too hard for him. His principal studies were astronomy and mathematics, medicine and the Arabic language. These were the subjects of his many publications. His pastime he spent in studying the philosophy of ARISTOTLE.

In 1171 MAIMONIDES was appointed first medical adviser of SALAHEDDIN JUSAF BEN-AJUL, Sultan of Egypt. This position he kept till his death. Of course he had enemies, many and mighty, who were jealous on account of his fame. They accused him of attempting to poison his Royal Master. Being thereto advised by his Prince, he fled, lived a few years in a cave, where, it is said, he wrote his most celebrated work, the More Nebuchin (Instructor of the Erring Ones). Afterwards he was recalled by the Sultan. There exists a letter from him, written to the learned Rabbi SAMUEL ABEN TIBBON, in which he gives account of his daily work. We quote from it:

"Between the King's Palace and my residence there are about two miles. I visit the former daily. If the Sultan, or anyone of his household is ill then I remain there the greater part of the day. If not, then I return home by noon. Having dismounted, washed my hands and entered my house, I always find it full of sufferers: Jews and Heathens, nobles and commoners, merchants and officers, friends and foes. I then politely request permission to take my meal, which I do once per day. Then I assist everyone present. They then go to make place for others, and it is usually dusk before I have finished. I then feel so exhausted, that I can scarcely speak and feel the necessity of lying down. From this it will be evident that, for social intercourse, I am entirely worthless, except on the Sabbath. On that day the greater part of the Jews come to me for instruction. They leave me in the afternoon and others come who remain till evening. This is so about my daily practice. When you shall have finished your translation (the works of MAIMONIDES from the Arabic into the Hebrew) then come and see for yourself."

No less than thirty books—among them large folios—written by this truly great man are to-day in existence. One of them entitled: Milluth Hagiggaon (the Study of Logic) was considered by Rabbi MOSES MENDELSON, the grandfather of BARTHOLODI, of such excellence that he wrote a commentary on it.

In 1200 this lofty sage departed this life at Cairo, deeply lamented by Jew and Gentile. His remains were buried with royal splendor at I'iberias. His memory is kept in honor by the learned men of all creeds, and throughout all ages. The Jews use the following maxim.

מִשֶּׁה עַד כֹּס כְּמִשֶּׁה

"Since MOSES (the Law-Giver) till the day of MOSES (MAIMONIDES) no one arose like MOSES!"

JARCHI⁽¹⁾ and KIMCHI.⁽²⁾ Those of ABEN EZRAH⁽³⁾ and Don ABRABANEL⁽⁴⁾ were not neglected. All at once, however, Mr. H. was called to a more honorable position, and R. BARUCH considered it inexpedient to put any obstacles in the way of his accepting it. Mr. H. had done his

(1) Rabbi SOLOMON HALLEVI, a celebrated commentator of the twelfth century. The chair, which this celebrated scholar used in his study, is kept as a memento, in the City-Hall of Worms.

(2) Rabbi DAVID KIMCHI, a great grammarian of the twelfth century.

(3) R. ABRAHAM BEN MEIR IBN EZRA was born in 1119 at Toledo, of celebrated parents. The Israelites have given him the title of Hackacham (the Sage), and the Christian theologians have honored him on account of his marvelous learning. He wrote on chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, astrology. Also on Hebrew, Latin, Arabic and Greek grammar. Beside, he was a great philosopher and an excellent poet. He traveled extensively and wrote his works one at Mantua, another at Rome; one at London and another in Greece. His commentaries, on all the books of the Old Testament, are translated in Latin and studied by, both, Jews and Christians with great delight.

(4) Rabbi Don ISAAC ABRABANEL was born at Lisbon A. D. 1437. His parents belonged to the nobility. Yet being of tender age, he excelled as a statesman and financier. Hence he was employed by King ALFONSUS V. as one of his principal advisers. He soon became renowned as a theologian, and specially as one of the greatest commentators on the Old Testament. Suspected by JOHN II, successor to ALFONSUS, of being a member of the conspiracy of the Duke of BRAGANZA, he was compelled to leave Portugal to save his life. He went to Spain (A. D. 1482). He was received with open arms, not only by the Jews but also by King FERDINAND and his Queen, ISABELLA, who employed him as Treasurer of the Royal Finances. When ten years later the Jews were banished from Spain, Don ISAAC ABRABANEL partook of the sorrows of his co-religionists. It was he who was delegated by the Israelites to plead with the Sovereigns in behalf of his people, offering a tremendous sum for the retraction of the fatal edict. It is well-known how the Inquisitor-General TORQUEMADA, frustrated this transaction. Don ISAAC went to Naples. There he served with great fidelity King FERDINAND I and afterwards his son and successor ALFONSUS II, until CHARLES VII, King of France, subjugated Naples. He accompanied his King to Sicily. After the death of ALFONSUS, he went to Corsica and subsequently departed this life A. D. 1508 after having happily solved some difficulties between Venetia and the government of Portugal. He slumbers at Padua.

The writings of this truly great man are very many. They are to this day studied by, both, Jewish and Christian theologians, who really admire them on account of their thoroughness and beauty of style. In those books he gives, more than once, vent to his deep hatred of the Christians and, unfortunately, of Christianity itself! But who was to be more blamed, the church, who, robbed and plundered and murdered the helpless Jews whenever she imagined—and it was, as a rule, only imagination!—that the Jews had given cause to this barbarous treatment, or the latter mentioned, who simply following the impulses of frail humanity, gave utterance to their indignant feelings in expressions and execrations, which few, very few Jews, nowadays, would endorse?—We are told that one of his sons, DON SAMUEL, joined the Church. (*Memorias da Acaademia de Lisbon*, II: 399, 400.

duties well and, therefore deserved something better. Subsequently the tutor and friend left BEN-ONIE, much to his regret, to become, after being duly examined, a Rabbi of an important Synagogue at The Hague.

BEN ONIE's parents considered it now necessary that their son's education should be directed into a different channel. In the town where Rabbi BARUCH resided, was an excellent college and it was deemed best to send BEN-ONIE there for the purpose of studying the modern languages and such other studies as were necessary to finish his education. He attended this college about four years, at the end of which time he graduated with the highest honors. Two months later he went to the city of Amsterdam, to be examined in the Hebrew language and literature, and herein, too, he was successful.

BEN-ONIE had, naturally, a religious inclination. Although educated by tutors who both were Pharisees and thus, more or less, fanatically disposed, yet BEN-ONIE was altogether free from phariseism and fanaticism. In later years he looked upon it as providential that both his Jewish teachers should have belonged to the school of the Pharisees. It furnished him a ready opportunity to learn, already in early life, the tenets of the Talmud, which were taught him in a manner that was calculated to repulse, rather than to attract him. It cannot be denied that the teaching of the Talmud and the entire religious system of the Rabbis began to appear to him as a problem, a riddle which, he knew, he would never be able to solve. And when he

afterwards experienced how the cavilings of the Talmud were the principal foundation on which millions of Jews established their religious life and practice, they became to him in the fullest sense of the word distasteful. He dearly loved the Bible, though a greater portion thereof he knew not as yet. And while he was, at that time, no admirer of the Talmud, yet he obeyed its rules and respected its precepts. God had given him a broad spirit, hence he was no exclusionist. In his simplicity he believed there was salvation beyond the Synagogue. For the Christians and their religion, so far as he was able to know both, and this knowledge was very limited, he had great respect, a thing very rare among orthodox Jews.⁽¹⁾ The reason of this is easily explained. The President and Preceptors of the college were faithful Christians; and without just exactly interfering with BEN-ONIE'S Jewish doctrines, they did not hide their candle under a bushel, but simply permitted it to shine naturally, and BEN-ONIE saw their good works. From time to time and later more regularly, he attended the Christian church, the Dutch Reformed, which is the National church of Holland. He paid the utmost attention to the sermon and soon was considered by the worshippers as one of themselves. Nor had his parents any serious objections, for they thought, they knew BEN-ONIE too well to doubt his genuine Jewish proclivities. The idea that their son could ever become

(1) I am happy to say that the more liberal, more cultured German Jews, differ in this respect widely from their brethren in Holland and England.

unfaithful to the Jewish religion, never entered their mind for a moment. Of course, neither Rabbi BARUCH, nor NAOMI knew that the Gospel was "a power unto salvation;" and where it is preached in all its fullness, it would make itself felt one day or another.

On a certain day the mail-carrier handed a letter to R. BARUCH from a gentleman, a Jewish citizen, unknown to him, of the village of D. in O., containing a most earnest and urgent request that BEN-ONIE might accept the position of religious tutor to his children.

At first it seemed to the Rabbi that his son should wait until another opportunity would present itself. His mother, who was equally desirous of her son remaining at home another year, saw however in the early call from O. a welcome opportunity which would put a stop to her son's frequent visiting the Christian church. For, although she had faith in BEN-ONIE'S Jewish convictions, yet it could lead, she thought, to no good, and it was, at any rate, a stumbling block of offence to other Jews, who began to look on BEN-ONIE with some suspicion.

BEN-ONIE himself was anxious that his parents should accept the invitation. He considered it the first step on the road which God had pointed out to him to travel through life. It corresponded entirely with the vows of his parents, made at the cradle, and it was an answer to his prayer which he uttered at the age of thirteen, when he was confirmed: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

After long consideration, the invitation was accepted and, as our readers have already learned from the first chapter, BEN-ONIE left home and went to D., a village in the Province of O., to accept the position of religious tutor to the children of Mr. T.

The first step which BEN-ONIE took in the path of public life, was also first in that of sorrow and suffering. He thought there grew roses only and no thorns. Of course, at his age he did not notice the latter. He had only eyes for the former.

"Farewell, my son, farewell," stammered R. BARUCH with difficulty, taking leave of BEN-ONIE. "May Israel's God be always your shield and buckler!"

The steamer, which carried BEN-ONIE to the place of his destination, was almost out of sight, when R. BARUCH once more lifted up his hands in the direction of the vessel. They indicated the last blessing which the pious father sent after his child.

When BEN-ONIE noticed that the city, as well as his father, were out of sight, he began to feel lonely and, as it were, forsaken. Being surrounded by strangers only, he felt the necessity of being alone. He went to the stern of the steamer and, for a long time, looked at the foaming waves.

A feeling of anxiety and even of fear took possession of him. Thoughts to which formerly he had been a perfect stranger, now began to agitate his mind. Within two days he expected to reach the village of D. to take up his abode

among strangers. Far away from those who were dear to him, he would find no one whom he could make a partaker in his joys, or sorrows. Beside, would he be able to accomplish the duties for which he was engaged? Would he be competent? To what school of thought would Mr. T. and his family belong? Perhaps ultra-Rabbinical, as is usually the case with the Jews in the country and small villages. If so, how intolerable would be his life! Will this first step be a successful, or an unfortunate one?

Such and similar thoughts kept him in a very uncomfortable state during the entire voyage. The following day, towards the evening, he arrived at the place of his destination and made his appearance in the family-circle of Mr. T. He gave at once the impression that the youthful instructor of religion was of a very quiet, and even of a gloomy temperament. Being wearied, on account of his sea-voyage, he soon requested permission to retire, which was, of course, gracefully granted.

Rabbi BARUCH had instructed his son to keep a faithful record of all occurrences. Therefore, BEN-ONIE'S first business was to write in his journal, which his father had given him for that purpose, a faithful account of what had transpired from the time he left home, till the moment of his arrival at D. When he had accomplished this, he turned himself towards Mizrach,⁽¹⁾ praying earnestly;

(1) מזרח East. The Jew always turns to the East when he offers up his devotions. It is the Talmudic opinion that God's presence is more prominent in the East than anywhere else. It comes to this conclusion by cabalistically turning the first Hebrew letters into words כ"ז ר"ח ח"ס "כ"ז זה ר"ח ח"ס "Here (dwells) the Living Spirit.

and having commended his beloved parents to Him who never "slumbereth nor sleepeth," he retired for the night, protected by MICHAEL, GABRIEL, ORIEL and RAPHAEL, the four principal angels, the company of which every pious Israelite invokes in his evening prayer.

In the extensive records in possession of BEN-ONIE's family, we learn that Ben-ONIE's grandfather, Don LUIS BELMONTE DEL L., through his second marriage with Donna ISABELLA, who departed this life when her son BARUCH MAURICIUS was but nine days old, was connected with a family which, since the fourteenth century, was one of the most renowned in Spain. The head of this family was the celebrated Rabbi SOLOMON HALLEVI of Burgos. In 1392, at the age of 40, this remarkable Israelite received the Sacrament of Baptism, together with his four sons (his wife was long since dead) who, at the time very young, afterwards became partakers of their father's name and fame. At his baptism he took the name of PAULUS DE SANTA MARIA. Having devoted himself to the study of theology, he received the title of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Paris. He became celebrated as a pulpit orator—PETRUS DE LUNA, afterwards Pope BENEDICTUS XIII, being one of his constant hearers. Later he became Archdeacon of Burgos; still later Bishop of Cartagina, and finally was translated to one of the most important dioceses viz.: Burgos, in which dignity one of his sons (two of whom became Bishops) succeeded him.

Bishop PAULUS is the author of that beautiful Hebrew poem, commencing: שְׁמִי חֹכֵר בְּרִבּוֹר אָחֵר which is sung in every Synagogue on the Sabbath. The first letter of each stanza put together, indicate his name שְׁלֹמֹה הַלֵּוִי "SOLOMON HALLEVI."

In a recent conversation with Dr. S. A. BINION M. A., I learned that this celebrated Bishop must have composed this ode when the light of Israel's Messiah was just commencing to illuminate his soul, which is evident from the following sentence in this poem:

עַל יְדֵי בֶן יִשְׁי בֵּת הַלְחָמִי קִרְבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי נֹאֵלָה

"By Jesse's son, the Bethlehemite,

Shall redemption draw near to my soul!"

Following the example of the Jews in regard to MAIMONIDES, (see Page 16, Note 1) the Christians have honored his memory with this maxim:

"Since PAULUS, (the Apostle) till PAULUS, (of Burgos) no one arose like PAULUS."

BEN-ONIE AMONG STRANGERS.

CHAPTER III.

“ Once more adieu! the rest let sorrow say.”

When BEN-ONIE awoke, he felt refreshed in body and soul. For some time the sun had been shining through the small windows of the young teacher's room and the birds had nearly finished their morning-lay in honor of their Creator, when he was notified that the breakfast-table was in readiness. Having finished his toilet, he went to the dining-room where Mr. T., his wife and family were awaiting him. He was respectfully and even heartily welcomed by all, while Mrs. T. showed him a place of honor at the table. Mr. JACOB T. was a middle-aged gentleman, of good appearance and fair culture. He was a business man in the fullest sense of the word. To it he devoted all his time and all his energy to such an extent that he had neither leisure, nor desire to interest himself about the instruction of his children. This, he thought, could be sufficiently accomplished by a tutor and, if necessary, supplied with the assistance of Mrs. T., his wife. Mrs. T. was a plain woman,

of the same age as her husband, of delicate health, pleasant manners, but altogether illiterate, making, like most Jewish women, no pretensions whatever of knowing anything of the Holy Scriptures. She, as well as her husband, belonged to the ultra-Rabbinical school and, consequently, were more superstitious than BEN-ONIE had either expected, or desired. He looked upon this as an ill-omen for the future. It could not be otherwise but that his religious views would, sooner or later, come in conflict with theirs ; the more so as BEN-ONIE was certainly not artful enough to avoid it, seeing that between his religion and the dry formalism of the Talmud there was as much difference as between light and darkness, between life and death. The children, who were trusted to his spiritual care, were two in number. The eldest was a boy of twelve years, one on whom nature had bestowed very few gifts indeed. He was dull and, consequently, the study of anything was an irksome task to him. During the hour of instruction he would sleep, or suck his thumb. Neither threatenings, nor entreaties were of any avail. And yet he was compelled to attend to his lessons one year longer; for not till he was thirteen years old could he become a member of the Synagogue. And not till then was he permitted to consider himself free from all religious instruction, and take his place in his father's business; particularly in that department where rags, bones and rusty iron were specialties. That was, after all, his sphere—the right man in the right place. Nothing suited him so well. In nothing took

he greater delight. And I may state here as a fact that, in after years, our thumb-sucker excelled all other Jews in the assorting of rags and the accumulation of bones and rusty iron! His brother was quite of a different nature. At the age of eleven he showed a talent which is rare in boys of that age. His whole appearance indicated that he was able to learn. Beside, he loved his studies. He took a delight in them, and it was for this reason that he could master within a few days what was incomprehensible to his brother after several weeks. No wonder that BEN-ONIE felt himself very much attached to him. Indeed, he loved him. It was, however, a matter of great regret that the course, which Mr. T. and his wife pursued in the education of their children, was one which is, alas, too common with many families. Instead of the parents controlling their children, the latter often control the former. And where this is the case, of course, instruction, of whatever nature this may be and by whomsóever given, must suffer materially. This was, alas, the misfortune of BEN-ONIE's pupils. As they scarcely recognized the full authority of their parents, something very rare among Israelites, it follows they sometimes doubted whether a tutor had any authority at all. And when, afterwards, BEN-ONIE's religious views came in conflict with not only those of the family but of the whole Jewish population in the village as well, and he consequently was looked upon as being heretical, the little authority, which he by earnestness as well as kindness had endeavored to exercise, began to wane. However, the first year

passed peacefully by, though it did not escape the attention of Mr. T. that BEN-ONIE's regard for the Talmud was not of that nature which he had a right to expect in one, who was preparing for the Rabbinical office.

Soon, however, an opportunity would present itself that would put an end to BEN-ONIE's usefulness in Mr. T.'s family and, at the same time, disturb the peace of his heart, at least to some extent. But before I mention this, I feel constrained to give an account of a religious ceremony which, among orthodox Jews, is to-day as obligatory as ever.

It is a well-known fact that on the seventh day of the week, which is the Jewish Sabbath, no manner of work may be done by the Israelites. According to the Talmud which, it must be borne in mind, is the rule of the religious life of the Jews, even the cooking of food is forbidden, since no fire may be touched on the Sabbath-day.⁽¹⁾ It is true, they make use of Christian servants who do it for them, but this is done by a trick, which the Talmud does not hesitate to teach them more than once. Here is one of the many: In the Gemara, Tract Hillechoth Yohm Tohb c. 1: 10 we read:

"It is not permitted (on the Sabbath, or Feast-day) to buy anything with measure, or weight. What then can be done? Say to the storekeeper: Fill this box, and—the following day pay for it. And although this box may be really a measure, yet it is lawful to use it, provided the measure's name be not mentioned."

(1) See Exod. XVI: 22, 33.

Further : "He who takes the hide from an animal which is slaughtered on a Feast-day, must not salt it, for this would be equal to tanning it, a work which does not properly belong to the preparation of food. It is, however, permitted to salt meat, yet attached to the hide, which is destined to be cooked. Now, for the purpose to save the hide, use a trick : How? Salt the meat here and there and so on, till at last, the entire hide be salted."

That which is unlawful on the Sabbath is, for the greater part, unlawful on a Feast-day. But the Talmud has provided for exceptions. It is lawful to prepare food on a Feast-day, provided it is done for the accommodation of one-self. "For," says the Talmud, "it is not lawful to bake, or cook on a Feast-day to feed gentiles and dogs."

"When it happens that a Feast-day falls on Friday, then it is not lawful to cook and bake for consumption on the following day, which is Sabbath," (Ibid IV: 1).

Now it is very plain that this law of the Rabbis has caused them, and all others concerned in this matter, great trouble. For, if it so happens that all the food prepared on Thursday is consumed on Friday, the poor Israelites have nothing to eat on Saturday, as it is absolutely forbidden to cook on the Sabbath (Exod. XVI: 22, 23). Now in order to prevent such a calamity, the Talmud has prescribed the following very solemn ceremony :⁽¹⁾

"If the first day of the Feast happens to

(1) See Prayer-book, by D. Levi.

be on a Thursday the following ceremony shall be observed: On Friday-eve the head of the family shall take a cake, or a piece of meat, or fish, or a baked egg and give it to one of those who attend the ceremony, indicating thereby that all other Jews in the city who, peradventure, may have forgotten to do as he did, may partake in the benefit procured by the same, namely prepare food on Friday (the second day of the Feast) for use on the Sabbath. Then shall he pronounce the following blessing: Blessed art Thou, O Eternal our God, King of the Universe, who hath sanctified us and commanded us to make this mixture. By which mixture it shall be lawful on the Feast-day to bake, to cook, to keep the food warm, to light candles, or lamps for our own benefit as well, as for all other Israelites who shall dwell in this city."⁽¹⁾

It will be observed that by this precaution, if even only one Jew has made the "mixture," it will be sufficient for all others, who shall have neglected it, to profit by it—so thoroughly does it work!

As, however, it may, possibly happen, that in a small town there are only three or four Jewish families, everyone of them, on account of care to provide as usual for daily bread, may have neglected to pay attention to the "mixture." In such a case no one would be permitted to cook on Friday, in order to have something to eat on the Sabbath. And to be satisfied with bread and butter only, could hardly be expected of an Israelite, nor

(1) The philosophy of this ceremony I have never been able to find out. Perhaps my readers may be more fortunate.

would it be according to the spirit of the Talmud which, throughout, shows that it is by no means indifferent to a good square dinner!⁽¹⁾ Now, by an unhappy concurrence of circumstances, it happened that the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) fell that year on Thursday and Friday. BEN-ONIE conducted the services on the first day in the Synagogue. Towards night the whole congregation assembled at the residence of Mr. T. to consult BEN-ONIE in a matter of the gravest importance. All looked cast down. Everyone, and most of all, the women, were evidently laboring under mental anxiety. Judging from their appearance, BEN-ONIE thought that some great calamity had visited the little flock. And when he, with the most sympathetic expressions, had inquired for the reason of their visit under such evident mental struggles and broken-heartedness, one of the women cried out :

"We dare not cook, nor bake, nor roast to-morrow !"

"Why not," BEN-ONIE inquired.

"Why not, because none of us has made an 'Erif Tabshillun,' " (the "mixture") replied the distressed woman.

"And is it for this reason alone that you all seem to be in such distress?" BEN-ONIE remarked.

"And why should we not be sorry," said the same woman who, it must be confessed, did not excel either in beauty, or elegance of speech, "don't you know that you, as well as

(1) See Note 3, Page 5.

everyone of us, shall have to be satisfied with a morsel of bread, with a little butter on it?"

"Well," replied the tutor kindly, "if none of you desire to prepare meals, we shall not perish on that account. With a piece of bread in the hand and God's peace in the heart, we shall yet be joyful on the Feast-day as on the Sabbath. Dear friends, let us not be ungrateful."

"Pretty nice words, indeed, but they do not satisfy an empty stomach," said the distressed Jewess.

For a few moments there was complete silence. Subsequently a certain man came to the front, one who imagined himself to be somebody, and yet was in reality nobody, though he was the self-constituted mouth-piece of everybody. He was a poorly educated Jew, although it was quite evident that he, now and then, had looked at some kind of a book, but had seldom opened one. One of those men, whom you can find in nearly every congregation, who seem to be created for no other purpose than to do mischief and cause disturbance in the community. This "wise man" addressed BEN-ONIE thus:

"If my memory does not altogether deceive me; my mother—peace be upon her!—was accustomed to say: 'Simon has a memory like an elephant,' and I always listen well, except to music, then I have understood you to say: If none of you desire to cook"—laying particular stress on the word desire. "Now I wish to ask you a question, especially as I know that you are quite learned in the Gemara, though you never mention it, nor do you ever

speak of the chackamim⁽¹⁾—peace be upon them!—which I always read—I read everything, you know, except poetry. But that is neither here nor there. But what I wish to ask you is: You know, if no Erif Tabshillun (mixture) is made, no one is permitted to prepare victuals, according to the precepts of the Talmud, and you also know that he who disregards the commandments of the Rabbis, is as much guilty as though he disregards the Law of Moses.⁽²⁾ Now I ask you, in the presence of this holy congregation, how do you dare say: ‘If none desires to cook?’ It is as clear as the sun that it is not left to our choice. We can count it upon our fingers that, on the Sabbath, we shall have to be satisfied with bread and water!”

“If this then be so,” asked BEN-ONIE, “why do you come to me for advice?”

“For the purpose of inquiring whether or not you could fix the words of the Rabbis—peace be upon them!—in such a way that we, for heaven’s sake! could cook anyhow; between you and me—if you don’t know a trick by which we could get something to eat on the holy Sabbath-day, you know!” imploringly answered the woman whose acquaintance we have already made.

“Woman,” replied BEN-ONIE indignantly, “I am not a trickster! and—”

(1) חכמים the “wise men”—Authors of the Talmud and Hebrew literature.

(2) This is, indeed, one of the maxims of the Talmud for its own glorification: “He who doubts the authority of the Talmud is regarded כאלו כופר בתורה כולה as though he denies the Law of God!”

Here is another:

“The Holy Scriptures may be compared with pure water; the Mishna with wine and the Gemara with excellent wine.”

"Stop, wait a moment," interrupted the "wise man," seeing that our good woman wished to resent BEN-ONIE's indignant reply—"wait a moment. The thing, at stake, is too earnest to treat it as a jest! Let me ask the learned teacher in holy things one more question: What is your private opinion in this matter? Do you really think it would be considered a great and unpardonable sin if, in honor of the holy Sabbath, our women indulge in cooking to-morrow a trifle to eat on the Sabbath."

BEN-ONIE was too young to perceive the web which was being woven around him; too inexperienced to notice, how this "wise man" was about to entangle him in his speech. He had no suspicion whatsoever and, therefore, openheartedly replied: "I have, indeed, respect for the institutions and commandments of the ancient Rabbis, although I am not able either to understand, or appreciate them sufficiently at all times. As for the ceremony in question, I do not believe that, on observing or ignoring it, eternal life at all depends."

"Don't you see, my friends," speedily and triumphantly exclaimed the "wise man," "my suspicion was not groundless. BEN-ONIE is inwardly a posh Yisrael,⁽¹⁾ a dangerous teacher. Of course, I don't fear him. He is not able to throw me off the right track. My faith is too well founded on the Talmud, though I am not sufficiently instructed to know what it teaches. But these little children, the poor lambs of the flock, entrusted to his care!"—

(1) פוש ישראל the best translation for these two Hebrew words is heretic.

A heavy sigh, while his eyes were lifted up to heaven, was the finale of this remarkable speech, which, indeed, was not uttered in vain. The worshiper of the Talmud, though he did not know what it teaches, had played his role successfully. His remarks had found a ready entrance into the hearts of Mr. T. and his wife who, from that moment, began to look with suspicion on all that BEN-ONIE did; whether he led the daily worship, or instructed his pupils, they distrusted him. A few days afterwards, in a general council of the Jews, which was presided over by the "wise man," it was unanimously decided to submit the whole affair to the Chief-Rabbi. In the meantime, pending the answer of said dignitary, BEN-ONIE was suspended from his functions as religious teacher and leader in the Synagogue.

BEN-ONIE bore the ordeal calmly. His conscience in no way accused him of having done aught unbecoming a Jew, or even a gentleman!—notwithstanding his depreciation of "the mixture." He knew, he had trespassed no commandment of the Law of MOSES, nor spoken disrespectfully of those of the Rabbis, even that of the "mixture" included! Beside, he thought he had sufficient reason to believe the Chief-Rabbi would consider the complaint in its true light, and deal fairly with a young man, scarcely twenty years old.

No doubt it must have been an unenviable position for BEN-ONIE to be surrounded by those whose fanaticism knew no limit. He painfully alludes to this in his journal, knowing from history that fanaticism has always

been the greatest enemy of social order, the great obstacle to the propagation of true religion and the principal hindrance to all manner of progress. BEN-ONIE keenly felt this. But he had confidence in the God of his Fathers. He awaited the decision with peaceful resignation.

Only a few days had elapsed, when he received the following letter from the Very Reverend Dr. JACOB F., Chief-Rabbi of the Province of O.:

“CITY OF Z., 185—.

“MY YOUNG FRIEND :

Two members of the Jewish congregation have vehemently accused you of paying no regard to the precepts of the Talmud and making light of ancient customs of the Jewish religion.

“Of course, your position as private tutor protects you against authoritative actions of mine. If Mr. T. is satisfied with your instruction and your religious standpoint, whatever they may be, I have no direct authority to interfere. As I am, however, profoundly interested in the future welfare of one who has only put his first step on the path of public life, I venture to give you some advice. In matters of more or less importance, never decide rashly. Be always careful how you express yourself. Can it be true that you have said that the commandments of the Talmud are “worthless?” I can scarcely believe that one who is about to present himself for examination as

More Ve-darshan,⁽¹⁾ could be so unfortunate as to express himself in such a reckless way. Such expressions would form an insurmountable barrier to your plan, and deny me the privilege of furnishing you with the necessary testimonials. Therefore consider your present and future condition. If you have no peace with the religious and ecclesiastical problems of Judaism as contained in the Mishna and Gemara, well—choose another vocation of life. You are yet young. If, however you wish to continue in the way you have commenced, you must submit yourself to the rules and regulations as contained in the Talmud, an epitome of which you can find in the Tuhr Orack Chayihm.⁽²⁾

“Together with this letter, your accusers, whose names I forbear to mention for the sake of peace, will receive my authority to immediately restore you to your rights and privileges; since the case specified, (Erif Tabshillun) is not of such a nature as to necessitate action upon it.

“Please accept my kind salutations and wishing you God’s blessing, I am your sincere friend,
J. F.”

The impression which this otherwise kind, very kind, letter made on BEN-ONIE was not a favorable one. Although the friendly disposition of the Chief-Rabbi was to him a source of great comfort, yet he thought, he was justified

(1) The Hebrew title of a Rabbi, or Jewish Minister.

(2) The title of a book, which treats on doctrines, rites, ceremonies, etc.

in concluding from the contents of the letter that even the Rabbi believed in the Talmudic precepts only so far as was expected of him in his quality as Chief-Rabbi. BEN-ONIE thought this was not honest.

Of course BEN-ONIE was too inexperienced to know that honesty in matters of faith among the Rabbis of the ultra-pharisaical school was then, and, I fear now, something to be wished for, but rarely attained. I have known several Rabbis of that school, and even some of the modern school (the confession of faith of the latter is very brief!) who regulate their official, or public belief according to the demands of those whom they serve!⁽¹⁾ That this is very kind, indeed, very accommodating—no one will deny it! Whether it answers to the first principles of morality—is a matter which I leave to those Ministers of Morality to decide! It reminds me, however, of a quack who recommended his medicines which, doubtless, were intended to be a panacea, or cure-all, to numberless spectators gathered at a market-place. Seeing a physician among the crowd he addressed him saying:

“Is it not true, doctor, mundus vult decipi?”⁽²⁾

“Yes, certainly,” replied the doctor.

(1) A few years ago, I had the honor of visiting a Rabbi in Cleveland, Dr. M., who confessed that he did not believe in an Almighty God. He justified his peculiar belief by showing that the verb *palal* (to pray) only appears in the reflective mood which as Hebrew grammarians know, is not correct. When I, however, called his attention to the fact that he, after his sermon, offered up a prayer, he was bold enough to confess that he “did not pray in accordance with his creed or belief!” “*Ex uno disce omnes!*”

(2) “The world will be deceived.”

“Well, then, *decipiatur ergo!*”⁽¹⁾ shouted the quack and, turning to the crowd, he exclaimed: “Don’t you see? even the physician says ‘yes, certainly.’” And the credulous people came and bought.

Far from being convinced of having erred, BEN-ONIE from that time more and more doubted the infallibility of the Talmud. He now began to study, whatever he had learned of the same, critically and by the light of the Holy Scriptures; compared the one with the other and derived from it much profit and consolation.

In regard to his position at the residence of Mr. T., instead of this being improved by the pacific letter of the Chief-Rabbi, it began, on the contrary, to be more and more intolerable. It was but too evident that they held him under the closest surveillance. Whatever he did, or taught, not wholly in harmony with the rules and regulations of the Talmud, was not only condemned in him, but cast in his teeth, not always gently, or even calmly. It is unlawful for a Jew to walk about with uncovered head.⁽²⁾ Now it happened sometimes that the tutor, willingly, or unwillingly, was

(1) “Then, let them be deceived.”

(2) An orthodox Jew is not permitted to uncover his head, except in the presence of royalty. The Talmud forbids it. Even in the Synagogue he dare not remove his hat. Of course, the modern Jews do not consider themselves bound, either by the Talmud, or the Holy Scriptures. They eat pork and rather fancy it! They disregard the Sabbath, and even some of them neglect circumcision! In fact they are not Jews, but Materialists. Nevertheless it must be admitted that, as a rule, morally, socially and politically, and even so far as culture is concerned, they far excel the orthodox Jews. It must, however, also be admitted that Christianity can expect more of the latter than of the former.

guilty of that crime. Whenever this took place his attention was called to it in a rather rough manner. If he unfortunately happened to step on the grass ⁽¹⁾ on the Sabbath, an admonition administered in the presence even of his pupils, was sure to follow. The result of all this worked detriment to BEN-ONIE'S influence with his pupils, and his love for Talmudic Judaism. Those days were trying days, and gladly would he have made proposals of separation, had not the law required of him a term of two years as tutor before he could apply for a testimonial from the Chief-Rabbi and be admitted to the Rabbinical examination. Mr. T. also hesitated to part with BEN-ONIE, seeing that the latter was considered a very good teacher, of which he, during his stay there, had given the most satisfactory evidences.

Finally the appointed time for BEN-ONIE'S examination as More Ve-darshan was near at hand. He, therefore, called on Dr. F., the Chief-Rabbi of the Province where he had resided during the last two years, for the necessary testimonial as required by law. It was granted him with the utmost kindness. The Chief-Rabbi of the Province of S. H. where, it will be remembered, BEN-ONIE was born, the venerable Dr. VAN E., the most intimate friend of BEN-ONIE'S parents, most cheerfully gave him a worthy introduction to his examiners. Both testimonials were written in the Hebrew language and, on account of their partly

(3) In stepping on the grass one is in danger of bending, or destroying it—an unnecessary work on the Sabbath!!

interesting, and partly peculiar contents, I have thought best to translate and insert them for the benefit of the reader.

TESTIMONIAL OF DR. J. F., THE CHIEF-RABBI OF
THE PROVINCE OF O.

“For two years I have had an opportunity of knowing BEN-ONIE and, I am happy to say, that he walks in the path of righteousness. He has done all he could to obtain the knowledge for the Rabbinical office, and is devoted to his studies. He fears God and loves his commandments. He has been a most successful religious teacher. I shall be happy, if he obtains what he desires. As he is very worthy, my best wishes follow him. I pray the Most High that He may bless him and make him a blessing in Israel.

DR. J. F.”

TESTIMONIAL OF THE CHIEF-RABBI OF S. H.

DR. VAN E.

“This document be for a testimonial to the youthful and pious BEN-ONIE, son of Rabbi BARUCH, the Levite.

“Happy am I that I am permitted to give this slight token of my love to him, whom I saw grow up, as it were, in my shadow. From the moment his mother brought him forth, I have not ceased to direct my eyes upon him. Yet being young, his heart burned within him for the Law, the Prophets and the Scriptures.

It was then that I laid my hands upon his head and blessed him. His heart likewise was consecrated to the service of God. He loves his parents as becomes a dutiful son, he obeys his teachers as an obedient pupil.

"And now that he is about to be examined as More Ve-darshan, should I not count myself blessed, while I behold him whom I love, about to be consecrated a priest of the Most High ?

"His abilities are, considering his age, more than sufficient. Therefore do I commend him to the kindness and good will of his examiners. 'When the Levite cometh, let him be a partaker in holy things!'

"The Almighty, who has been my shield and buckler to the day wherein I have reached my eighty-fifth year, bless, keep and preserve BEN-ONIE. May he earnestly pray for the speedy advent of the blessed Messiah, the Lord our Righteousness, who will rebuild the temple and forgive all our sins. Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, who in Thy mercy, will remember Zion ! O Son of David, come and help us ! Amen.

"These are the words of the aged man (שֵׁנָה) who awaiteth Thy salvation, O Lord."

Provided with these and similar documents, together with the certificates from the college, as by law required, BEN-ONIE wrote to the Minister of Public Worship, announcing himself a candidate for examination as More Ve-darshan. Three weeks later he received a letter from the Secretary of the Rabbinical Committee of Examination, informing him of the

place where, and the hour when the examination was to be held, and summoning him to be present then and there.

When the time had come, BEN-ONIE was present. On the evening previous to that day, he called on the Members of the Comité, to pay his respects. Every one of them received him courteously, only one of them heartily. It hardly needs mentioning that this was Dr. F. of O., who cheered and encouraged him.

The following morning, at the hour appointed, BEN-ONIE went to the Seminary where the annual examinations are always held. Only four candidates, beside himself, were in the ante-chamber. All were young and inexperienced, knowing much theoretically, nothing, or next to nothing practically. They look as young men always look, when they are about to confront their examiners, who hold, as it were, in the hollow of their hand, their future weal or woe.

Indeed examiners are men of great importance and dangerous, if they are aware of it. And more than dangerous if, as often happens, they do not know how to examine. They are judges from whose judgment there is no appeal.

While the young men were making each others acquaintance, a venerable gentleman of solemn appearance and aristocratic manners entered the room. He was the President of the Committee, Dr. S. I. M., famous on account of his excellent translation of the Pentateuch, and of his narrow views in regard to the technical inspiration not only of the letters, but even the vowels of the Holy Scriptures!

He was held in great esteem by the Professors of the Oriental Faculty in the University of Leiden,⁽¹⁾ on account of his wonderful knowledge of the Hebrew language.

"Gentlemen, pardon my intrusion," said he very pleasantly. "I simply wish to ask, if BEN-ONIE of D. is among you."

At the mentioning of his name, BEN-ONIE arose and very respectfully said: "Reverend Sir, I have the honor to be the object of your inquiry."

"May I then request you to be so kind as to follow me?" asked Dr. M.

"Without the least hesitation," answered BEN-ONIE.

Both gentlemen went up stairs, entered a small room and, when seated, Dr. M., looking somewhat displeased, addressed BEN-ONIE thus:

"Sir, before you submit yourself to be examined, I deem it my duty to inform you that I have received a letter from one of the principal members of the Jewish Congregation of D., in which he speaks of your religious conduct very unfavorably. It contains the following accusations, which, with your permission, I shall read to you.

1st. "That BEN-ONIE is a Posh Yisrael⁽²⁾ of which he has given abundant proof.

2d. "That he has no respect whatsoever for the Talmud, and altogether ignores the precepts of the Rabbis, neglecting as he does the ancient customs of the Fathers, and finally:

(1) Specially by the celebrated Orientalist, Prof. Dr. VAN DER PALM, to Whom Dr. M. dedicated his translation of the Pentateuch.

(2) Heretic.

3d. "That he, with enticing words, deceives the Congregation and, by his corrupt teaching, utterly destroys the lambs of the flock of Jeshurun."

All the accusations were substantiated with such proofs as: "Walking on the grass and carrying a watch⁽¹⁾ on the Sabbath, appearing outdoors with uncovered head and last, but not least, his opinion about Erif Tabshillun."

Of course it will be understood that the author of this remarkable letter was the "wise man," who so prominently figured in the "mixture"-muddle and who seemed distressed on account of BEN-ONIE's teaching the "poor children."

Thus far BEN-ONIE had listened to these serious accusations with calmness of heart and mind. Though from the standpoint of the strictest orthodoxy, in regard to Rabbinical institutions, such accusations may indeed obstruct the future usefulness of a young man, preparing himself for the Jewish Ministry, yet BEN-ONIE thought that they were not weighty enough to constitute a sufficient basis for ultimate excommunication. He soon, however, found out that his opinion was not shared by Dr. M., for he resumed: "You see, therefore, sir, that I am well informed and the gentleman, whose signature this is, I know. This is not the proper time to make a defence. I simply would give you the following advice. Request the Committee to excuse you for one year; during which period you will have

(1) A strict orthodox Jew will not carry his watch on the Sabbath; nor even a handkerchief; he will tie it around his waist, as though it were a piece of clothing!

ample time, either to defend yourself, or to show that you have come to better opinions in regard to those things of which you have been accused. If, however, you refuse to follow this advice, then it will be my duty to lay this unfortunate letter before the Committee, and you can have no doubt as to the consequences. What is your decision, sir? You see the necessity for a speedy reply, as my time is limited."

BEN-ONIE felt the weight of the moment more than could be expressed. The words of the President, though well meant, had almost overwhelmed him. What could he do? To return without having accomplished his desire—what would the world, what his enemies and, above all, what would his parents think of him? To say that he was as yet not prepared—seemed to him untrue; everyone knew better. To tell the truth—was beyond his courage. It would rend the heart of his mother. It would be a terrible blow to his father. The position in which he was, was a trying one. For a few moments he knew not which of the alternatives to choose. Seeing, however, that he was trespassing on the time of the President, he took the required courage and said with a voice which left no doubt as to his meaning:

"Mr. President, I have decided to submit to the examination."

"I admire your courage," said Dr. M., "but doubt the wisdom of your decision. Do you not fear the consequences?"

"I trust in God," replied BEN-ONIE.

Well, so be it," exclaimed the President, evidently pleased with BEN-ONIE's answer.

Promptly at 11 o'clock the candidates were requested to enter the hall. It was a spacious room, in the center of which stood a large square table, behind which six grave-looking, gray-haired and black-gowned gentlemen were seated. These constituted the Rabbinical Committee. It did not escape BEN-ONIE's attention that some of the examiners looked at him more significantly than was either expected or desired. One of them, the Chief-Rabbi of the Province of D., made himself rather conspicuous and disagreeable. It was evident that he was neither comfortably, nor kindly disposed. His colleague of D., Dr. F., was good natured. As soon as he noticed BEN-ONIE, who was ignorant which of the five chairs before the table he was expected to take, he approached him, kindly shook his hand and showed him a seat close to him, as if he wished to say I shall protect you. For this kindness BEN-ONIE, in after-times showed himself grateful.

Finally the examination commenced and lasted till about 6 P. M. BEN-ONIE was treated with severity and even sometimes with rudeness. Although the law prescribes exactly the limits of the examination, yet if an examiner wishes to be unkind, or extraordinarily severe and exacting, he can find many an opportunity to do so and torture his poor victim to such an extent that, at last, he does not know how to answer at all.—Suppose, one is to be examined in history. If now the candidate gives plain evidence that he is not acquainted

with the Conspiracy of Cataline, then I consider it unwise, useless and unkind, for the examiner to ask who was at the head of the conspiracy and, further, in which year it happened and, further still, who suppressed it. Such an examiner was the Very Reverend Chief-Rabbi H. of D., one of the most fanatical of all Rabbis. He was really the personification thereof. When his turn came to examine the candidates in that part of the Talmud assigned to him, he utilized every opportunity to show his ill-will to BEN-ONIE. He requested him to give a full account of the Talmudic precepts in regard to the Sabbath; and when he tormented him with the solemn, interesting and striking ceremony of the Erif Tabshillun and a number of such kindred doctrines with which Judaism, alas, is afflicted, Dr. F. jokingly remarked: "Show the gentlemen that you understand how to ask more important questions and give them an opportunity to answer them."

The President, Dr. S. I. M., was temperate and fair in his examination, though stiff and suspicious in his manners.

Dr. F. was exceedingly kind and encouraging; showing in every way the true scholar; the clear-headed, kind-hearted and humble-minded man.

Whether it was due to BEN-ONIE's ability that he to each question successfully gave the corresponding answer—he himself wrote thus:

"Had not the God of my Fathers protected me, they certainly would have rejected me. They would have asked questions which I could not, and others which I would not

answer. But God, who rules the 'hearts of kings like water-brooks,' controlled the examination, to prove that He does not confound those who trust in Him. When earthly comforts seem at a distance, then God's kindness is at hand. When all around us is darkness, then he shows us the light of His countenance. Happy is he who puts his trust in JACOB'S God. He need not fear. 'God is with him, what can man do unto him.'"

The examination had finally come to an end. The candidates were, as usual, requested to retire, to give the Committee an opportunity to discuss the results and act accordingly. After one hour's painful waiting, the Sexton appeared and informed the gentlemen that the Committee requested their attendance. Everyone made speed, except BEN-ONIE. His expectations were not of a sanguine character. Having entered the hall, he stood "afar off." The President began to read the decision of the Committee. It was a long document, characterized by its verbosity. However, no one listens to this, because no one is interested in it. But when, after a while, he began to mention names, everyone, of course, was exceedingly attentive. "*Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant.*"⁽¹⁾ He proceeded slowly and when he had mentioned every name, BEN-ONIE'S last, he declared that the Committee had found no reason, why everyone of them should not be admitted as More Ve-darshan, bestowing the title of Rabbi on all, including

(1) "All were silent and attentive." (Virg. Aen. 2d book.)

BEN-ONIE The latter, suffering at that moment from an attack of nervousness, had not sufficiently understood the result and, in the simplicity of his heart, he addressed himself to Dr. F.: "And I, Reverend Doctor, am I successful too?" The manner in which he expressed these words, which showed that his mind must have been directed on other subjects—perhaps on his parents, or on his God, or on both—touched the truly noble Chief-Rabbi, for he came forward, clasped **BEN-ONIE**'s hands and said: "Yes, my friend, with the greatest honor to yourself and complete satisfaction to the Committee."

Without saying a single word, **BEN-ONIE** left the hall, took a cab, went to the railway-depot, bought a ticket and, before another day had passed, rejoiced in the blessings of his parents, which **R. BARUCH** and **NAOMI** so tenderly and liberally bestowed upon their son.

Just ten days later, **BEN-ONIE** received and accepted a call from a congregation in the Province of D.

An incident, which happened when **BEN-ONIE** left the hall after his examination, ought to be mentioned here. One of the examiners following him, said angrily: "Sir, I hope to meet you again!" This was Chief-Rabbi **H.** of the Province of D. who, the reader will kindly remember, brought upon himself the pleasantry of Dr. F. while he was examining **BEN-ONIE** in that portion of the Talmud which treats of cooking, stewing, baking and broiling on a Feast-day. The good

Rabbi seemed not to relish it, and he had made up his mind that BEN-ONIE should pay for it. BEN-ONIE, however, scarcely took notice of him. His mind, then, was occupied with thoughts of his parents, his heart held communion with his God. When, however, he received the call from L. in the jurisdiction of the above mentioned Chief-Rabbi, he remembered his words, which certainly neither encouraged, nor cheered him on his way. Nevertheless, he considered it his duty to accept the call and meet the difficulties which, in the providence of God, would present themselves. BEN-ONIE had a steadfast faith in his God, a child-like confidence in Jehovah. He was thoroughly convinced that He ordered every man's steps. Besides, he knew but too well that Israel was an exile among the Gentiles, a stranger in the land of pilgrimage. An Israelite was destined to suffer, suffer not only for his own sins, but also for those of the Fathers. And was he not an Israelite, a Jew, a Hebrew among Hebrews? Let come what will—BEN-ONIE will not shrink back when duty requires of him to suffer! Yet a little while—and Messiah, the Son of DAVID will come! Who knows, yet a few years, a few weeks, and—behold, ELIJAH, the prophet will appear, to herald the advent of Israel's Messiah and King! "Then shall we go home; go to Canaan, our own beloved country. Then shall we build the Temple of our God, and offer on his Altar the sacrifices of thanks and praise!"

Such and similar thoughts, once so dear to the heart of many a noble Israelite in days

gone by, but now, alas, of little interest to most of the Jews, inspired, comforted and encouraged BEN-ONIE. He thoroughly believed in the promises of God in the Holy Scriptures. The views of the Talmud, however, in regard to the Messiah, could not be reconciled with the plain text of the Bible—thus thought BEN-ONIE. Besides they were not only contradictory to the words of the Prophet, but the Rabbis were not even in harmony with one another. The more he read them the more they looked to him absurd, even disgusting. And when he sometimes uttered his mind to his parents, his mother would gently admonish him, saying, that to cultivate such feelings against the authority of the Talmud might lead to serious consequences; that, indeed, they might impair his success as a Rabbi in Israel and confound the most sanguine expectations of his father, as well as those of his mother. But BEN-ONIE always succeeded in allaying his mother's fears by convincing her that they were merely imaginary and that "a little more confidence in Jehovah, specially in regard to her son, would save her much anxiety."

"Dear mother," said he, "for heaven's sake, be not afraid; neither trouble yourself too much about me. I hope always to act as becomes a true Israelite. Since I can be no hypocrite, I am bound to be honorable. God loves the truth. He hates falsehood. I shall try to love those committed to my care and, no doubt, they will, in consequence love me. The rest we must leave to Him, who governs all things in heaven and on earth. If

it be His will that we must suffer, well, we are not better than our Fathers were. They have suffered and yet have trusted in God. An Israelite, in exile, must suffer. Since Israel's harp hangs on the willows of Babylon, what can he do otherwise but suffer and weep? However, God has limited the days of mourning. He cannot always forget Zion. He cannot always forsake Jerusalem, the city of DAVID—Jerusalem, his own city! Only a few more years—God grant a few more days only!—and IMMANUEL comes, Messiah, our King, our Redeemer, to gather our people from the four corners of the earth and bring us to the land of our inheritance. Then mother, dear mother, then shall we rejoice and sing Zion's hymns in Zion's Temple. 'Le-shahnah habbaah berushalayim!' Next year, my own darling mother, next year in Jerusalem! Then shall we understand the truth of Israel's sweetest singer: 'He who soweth in tears, shall reap in joy.'

"Amen, and amen!" exclaimed Rabbi BARUCH and NAOMI, placing their hands on their son's head, and blessing him, saying: "The Lord make thee as EPHRAIM and MENASSEH! The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

Three days later BEN-ONIE received his commission as "Rabbi in Israel" accompanied by the following letter:

"MY DEAR FRIEND: In this envelope you will find your Commission, which will show that you have been duly admitted by the Rabbinical Committee as More Ve-darshan.

"Permit me to add my congratulations, together with my kind wishes for your success, of which there hardly can be any doubt, if your love for the Oral Law may equal the love you unmistakably have for the Written Law. But above all learn of MOSES, the servant of the Lord, to be humble; and be tolerant to those who differ from you in matters of doctrine, or even religion. And thus you will prove that you have not mistaken your calling to be a missionary among the nations of the world, to teach them that "the Lord our God is one Lord."

"Your sincere friend, JACOB F., Ph. D.,
Chief-Rabbi of the Province of O."

BEN-ONIE RABBI IN ISRAEL.

CHAPTER IV.

“There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we will.”

We now see BEN-ONIE fairly on the road which leads to the Fountain, the waters of which only could slake the thirst of him whose heart was panting after God, “after the living God.” Every step, he now puts forward on that road, is one nearer to Him, whose advent he was so anxiously waiting for, longing for, panting for, praying for! But how crooked was that path! Now over high hills, then through deep valleys. Sometimes through trackless deserts, other times along dangerous precipices. Always full of thorns—with only now and then a solitary rose!

“O’er moor and fen, o’er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone.”

It is a great blessing, and one for which mankind cannot be sufficiently grateful, that the future is hidden from our view. We know not what may happen to us in the near future. Were it otherwise, how oft would we despair of ever reaching the goal, of ever accomplishing our duty, of ever “apprehending that for which we are apprehended.” Blessed

is he, who is able to put his trust in Him, without whose will no sparrow can fall to the earth! He will be, neither disappointed, nor confounded.

Thoroughly convinced of this, BEN-ONIE looked forward with gladness and joy to the day, when he should go to the congregation which had called him. That day had finally come. Accompanied by his parents, he went to the town of L. in the Province of D.

The Jewish population of that town was, as in all similar towns of Europe, very small. From fifteen to twenty families is about the usual number. They are, as a rule, engaged in business of every kind; dry-goods, however, predominate. Often they keep a number of pedlers—generally Christians—who accommodate the country-people with dry-goods, for which they take rags, and bones, and old iron in exchange. By this means the profits are twofold. Within a few years, these sons of Israel have governed their business in such a way that they are quite independent. Others are occupied in the butchers-trade and, generally, do a very profitable business; the more so, since the Christian butchers confine themselves to the pork-trade and are very fond of Jewish beef without, of course, expecting a reciprocal fondness among the Jews for Christian pork! Hence the Jewish butchers take good care and use all lawful means—from a business point of view, certainly!—that, in regard to money, it shall be always ebb on the Christian side, and flood on the Jewish side. In fact, figuratively speaking, they often butcher, both, the beef and the

beef-eater! Sometimes they sell dry-goods too; keeping on hand quite an assortment of mourning, for the accommodation of the relatives of those whom they butcher with their beef. And especially is this the case, when, as often happens, the meat is of a very ancient character. But for this we must not blame the Jewish butcher too severely for, from his standpoint as a Jew, he simply makes use of the right of retaliation. Since Christians are not tenderly disposed towards the Jews, the Jewish butcher—as a representative class among the Jews—serves the Christians with tough beef!

Artisans, or mechanics are very rare among the Jews, and never do we meet agriculturists among them. The work of the former does not sufficiently pay—and that of the latter is considered too laborious for the elect nation! Therefore they kindly abstain from both, to oblige their Christian brethren!

The Jewish Congregation at L. belonged to the above mentioned classes. They were business men, butchers and worshipers of the Talmud. They had just built a Synagogue, where they gathered every Friday-evening, and three times on Saturday, to worship God according to the rites and ceremonies of the Talmud, and to listen to BEN-ONIE's explanation of that portion of the Pentateuch and Haphtaroth,⁽¹⁾ which were prescribed by the calendar.

It need scarcely be remarked that, in explaining the Holy Scriptures, BEN - ONIE

(1) Haphtaroth—thus are called the portions of the Prophets and Scriptures, which are read on the Sabbath and Feast-days, during the morning service, immediately after the appointed lesson of the Pentateuch.

diligently avoided everything that could cause disturbance of the peace. In order to do this successfully, he confined himself principally to the Haphtaroth. By doing so, he escaped the teachings of the Rabbis, reverence and absolute obedience to whom he could not heartily and cheerfully advocate. The Prophets, however, gave him a ready opportunity to speak much of Israel's Messiah and Israel's glorious future—subjects which were exceedingly dear to his heart. The Psalms were to him an inexhaustible source, from which he could draw various and rich subjects to inculcate lessons of wisdom and piety—topics which were calculated to cultivate religious sentiments and the propagation of a pure and holy life.

For some time this kind of preaching was tolerated and even appreciated, on account of its novelty. When, however, BEN-ONIE began to lay emphasis on the practice of love and charity towards everyone, in spite even of one's particular, or peculiar religious opinions, since the whole human race is one family—children of the one heavenly Father—a doctrine which somewhat contradicts the plain statements of a great number of Talmudists,⁽¹⁾ then the members of the congregation, especially the butchers, began to revolt. Such preaching was altogether new—rather too severe for them, and too complimentary to their antagonists. The business-men pro-

(1) While it is true that a great many Talmudists confine salvation to the Jews only, I am happy to say that there are expressions in the Talmud which show a more charitable and liberal spirit. Here is one:

חסד אבות הע י ש להם חלק לעולם הבא

‘The pious among the Gentiles have part in the world to come.’

tested—for it would materially interfere with their daily practices. The butchers murmured—for, what would become of their tough beef? Besides, to ignore systematically the commandments of the Rabbis—peace be upon them!—was something for which the congregation would, sooner or later, fear the wrath of heaven—thus the female portion of the congregation complained. Indeed to an ultra-orthodox Jew nothing is so dear as a Rabbinical argument about a pot of soup, in which a drop of candle-grease has fallen, whether this soup may be eaten, or not by a Jew; or, under what circumstances a man may give his wife a letter of divorce;⁽¹⁾ or, when his house is on fire on the Sabbath, what he may save, and what not.⁽²⁾ In such subjects the Rabbinical Jew is far more interested than in matters which constituted BEN-ONIE's themes and thoughts. And it must be admitted that the arguments about meals, etc., correspond more with man's gastronomic demands than the latter!⁽³⁾ Consequently, a preacher who is not quite ready to satisfy the individual taste of those whom he is to teach

(1) Not long before the Christian era there existed two important schools in Jerusalem, presided over by R. HILLEL and R. SCHAMAI, respectively; the students of which kept themselves in hot water about the question: "When is a man permitted to give his wife a letter of divorce?" After much speculation about this very important subject, the first mentioned school—and this was the most liberal of the two—came to the conclusion, that a letter of divorce may be granted, when, in an unguarded moment, she has burned her dinner! And, notwithstanding such loose teaching, it must be confessed to the honor of the Israelites and their public morals, that—so far as I know—scarcely half a dozen divorces were granted by the Sanhedrin, as long as this court—it was Israel's supreme court—had any jurisdiction over the Jews.

(2) It sounds almost incredible and yet it is true that, according to the Talmud, the only thing a Jew may save from a house which is on fire on the Sabbath is—the dinner! (See Talmud, Tract. Sabbath.)

(3) Of which the Talmud gives abundant proof!

the highest interests of this life and the life to come, is entirely useless. He is an obstacle, a burden too heavy to bear. Just imagine, a minister arguing against excess in dancing while the majority of his congregation, one and all communicants, know of no greater delight in heaven and on earth than that which is enjoyed in the ball-room! Or, to hear him protesting, in or out of the pulpit, against the abominable practice of lynching, as being an insult against all social and divine law and order, while the greater portion of his congregation, all and every one communicants, not only do not protest against the accursed and demoralizing practice, but, partly secretly, partly openly, applaud the miserable crime, doing their utmost to protect the culprits and defeat the ends of justice!—who would not think that such a minister is altogether out of date? It is true, such ministerial conduct was once permitted and tolerated in the days of MOSES, SAMUEL, ELIJAH, ISAIAH and in those of the Apostles and the Reformers. But who is stupid enough in our day of progress in science, of civilization and cultivation to permit anyone, though he claims Apostolic authority, or even succession, to prescribe rules and regulations which are antagonistic to our common sense and revolting against our natural requirements, daily practices and social enjoyments? If, in our day, a minister of religion be tolerated at all, let him be satisfied with simply explaining the Scriptures and leave the application thereof to the people themselves! He has no business to interfere with our daily, or social life! To be his

"brothers' keeper," is simply presumptuous! We are of age. We have outgrown the authority of the church. We shall attend to our own business!

As this is, nowadays, the sentiment of the majority of mankind, and as majorities rule in this country of ours, I beg to give the following advice: Let each church-community make a programme which must exactly state what and how long a minister is to teach and preach and, if he dare to deviate from the programme, demand his resignation instantly! Or, if this be, either impossible, or impracticable—then simply dismiss him—with, or without the "benediction." And if this be unsuccessful, then—well, then starve him, his wife and children—if he unfortunately have any! The benefits to be derived from following faithfully this advice, which, by the way, is given after many years of experience, of suffering and deprivation, are many:

FIRST, The ministry will become exceedingly humble; fearfully stupid and monstrously dishonest; especially, if you take good care that the salary, at no time, exceed that of a street-car driver!

SECOND, You may rest assured that, with such treatment and such allowance for daily bread, neither your doctrines, nor your practices will be seriously interfered with, and

THIRD, You will soon notice bigotry and fanaticism enthroned as in the days of yore; while saloons, and all other kindred institutions, will enjoy undisturbed peace and universal patronage!

What a happy millenium this wou'd be! A country, practically, without God's Book, God's Day, God's Church! A second edition of the French Revolution of '89—only augmented in extent and increased in woe and misery!—

But let us return to BEN-ONIE, who soon began to notice that his usefulness was very limited at L. Three incidents intensified the apathy with which most of the Jews regarded him. In the first place, a letter from the

Chief-Rabbi of D., in which that dignitary explained the rather novel manner of BEN-ONIE's teaching and preaching as due to his being a "Posh Ysrael;"⁽¹⁾ one who has imbibed the "destructive theology of the Germans and who sooner or later, will make common cause with Israel's enemies against us." A second reason, why BEN-ONIE began to be unpopular, was his withdrawal from society, for two causes: He wished to avoid all controversy and, besides, he was anxious to devote every available moment of time to his studies. In those days he felt himself most attracted to the works of MAIMONIDES, among which the More Nebuchin demanded all his attention.⁽²⁾ A third reason, why his people began to lose confidence in him as a Jew, was not so much the important letter of the amiable Chief-Rabbi, but his frequent calls on the Rev. Mr. K., the Pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church in the town. It must, however, be borne in mind that this visiting the Christian clergyman was for no other purpose than for social and intellectual enjoyment. BEN-ONIE had at that time no special desire, nor Mr. K. any intention of either discussing, or recommending Christian doctrines. The reason, why the former multiplied his visits at the parsonage, was the hearty welcome and unlimited hospitality, which were truly proverbial of the worthy clergyman and his noble family. Besides, Mr. K. was a truly pious gentleman and one of the few Christians

(1) Heretic.

(2) See the Note on Page 16.

who understood how to respect an Israelite as being a descendant of a grand race. More than once gave he utterance to expressions, in the family-circle as well as in the pulpit, which left no doubt of his sincere admiration and love towards the lost sheep of the house of Israel. BEN-ONIE mentions one of them in his journal with evident pleasure: "If the Christian Church, in time past, had learned more of the Master, instead of speculating about the Master, the Israelites, instead of roaming among the nations of the earth, would now be loyal subjects of their lawful King Jesus, the Christ, and citizens of the spiritual Canaan." Another grand feature of this "Preacher of righteousness" was his discretion when he, afterwards, alluded to the many excellencies which Christianity possesses above all other religious systems. For, it could not be otherwise, but that the conversations between Mr. K. and BEN-ONIE, a Christian Clergyman and a Jewish Rabbi, should lead sometimes to religious subjects. And it was just then that Mr. K's fidelity to his office on the one side, and his tender feelings for his friend's convictions on the other, were most evident. Mr. K. did not belong to those over-zealous proselyting Christians, who think themselves justified in using all means to persuade a Jew to be baptized; nor did he belong to those who are altogether indifferent to Israel's religious interests and, consequently, avoid every opportunity to obey the command of the Saviour, to preach the Gospel—"beginning at Jerusalem." Those two extremes must be avoided if, in preaching the gospel

to the Jews, one looks forward to success.

“Never,”—thus ends BEN-ONIE’S description of the Clergyman and his family—“never shall I forget the impression which your humble and pious life has made on my heart, noble sage! Never can I forget, how you have received in your family-circle an insignificant rabbi of a small Jewish congregation. Never shall I forget that precious moment when you, bidding me farewell, said: ‘God will prosper your way and guide you according to his gracious will.’ At the moment you expressed these words, I did not comprehend their extensive meaning. But afterwards—when God had opened my eyes and inclined my heart to the truth—when I felt that God is love; afterwards—when the good shepherd had found the lamb, wandering in the wilderness, had nursed it at his bosom and had brought it to his own fold; afterwards—when my soul was purified in the Waters of Regeneration, fed and nourished with Messiah’s own body and blood; afterwards—when I had understood that Israel’s God is Father, my own Father and I His son, His own son—then I understood that word which, in prophetic ecstasy, you had uttered at the shores of Holland’s grandest stream! Farewell, venerable servant of God, farewell! You have wrought a good work on me. You have accomplished your duty as a Christian! You have glorified your Master! The crown of righteousness is laid up for you!”

It is evident that the social conversation

which BEN-ONIE frequently enjoyed at the residence of the Reverend Mr. K., had left not only the most favorable impressions in BEN-ONIE's soul, but had led to the most blessed results. Not because Mr. K. had continually pressed upon his friend the necessity of conversion and baptism; or unceasingly complained of Israel's "hardness of heart;" or tormented him with tracts, such as are too often only insoluble problems to the Jews—this he certainly did not; but because he had showed a veneration for the ancient people of God, such as is rarely noticed among the Christians in our day, and on account of his daily life, which was blameless before God. These were the reasons why Mr. K. was ordained by the spirit of God to be one of the first instruments of BEN-ONIE's conversion to Christianity. And, in this way, every true Christian can become what he ought to be: A missionary to the Jews. Let any one show his faith by his good works, his kindness through genuine sympathy, his sincerity with love unfeigned—and he will, to be sure, leave the impression on the heart of the Jew that there is a power in the Gospel, which cannot so easily be resisted. And these are instruments which a faithful Christian, who understands something of self-renunciation, can easily handle. Such a mission, the sincere Jew will respect and the cause of Christianity will, by it, succeed and be a blessing to both Jew and Gentile.

It could not be otherwise but that BEN-ONIE's frequent calls on the Christian pastor were very offensive to the Jews. Of this they

were not slow in giving him the plainest proofs. They began to avoid him; some of them refused to pay attention to his sermons and others remained away from the Synagogue altogether.

BEN-ONIE, seeing the result of his visits to Mr. K., decided, in the interest of peace, to make them few and far between.

From that moment he began to devote all his time to the study of the prophecies, and particularly to those of ISAIAH, since it was from them that Mr. K. took his principal proofs of the truthfulness of his creed.

"This period," BEN-ONIE wrote in his journal, "was for me the most glorious I have been permitted to enjoy since I left home. Separated, as it were, from the world and left altogether to myself, I was really enabled, through God's assistance, to study, with benefit to mind as well as heart, that portion of God's word, which my teachers had omitted, and which I had neglected, in order to pay attention, too much attention to the Talmud."

At that time BEN-ONIE had purchased a few books on Christian Theology and Evidences. A copy of the New Testament was presented to him by Mrs. K., but it must be mentioned, that it took a long time before he could command sufficient courage to read it.

One year passed by quietly. Nothing of interest disturbed the peace which BEN-ONIE required so much, in order to search the word of God and find Him, of whom MOSES, the PROPHETS and the SCRIPTURES have testified. At the expiration of that year, BEN-ONIE was called to the city of R., in the Province of L.,

where a great number of Israelites worshiped in one of the handsomest Synagogues in the Kingdom of Holland. After due consideration, and with the sanction of his parents and the heartfelt gratitude of the Chief-Rabbi of D., into whom the soul of CAIAPHAS must have migrated, if the Hindoos are right, he accepted the call. Having taken leave of his congregation and his Christian friends, he left the town of L., where he had read MOSES and the Scriptures for the space of nearly three years.

"Little have I accomplished," thus ends his farewell address at L., "but on that little the Father of All can bestow his blessing. Limited, very limited is the amount of seed I have sown among you, but it was good seed. I took it from the storehouse of Jehovah-God. If, sometimes, a reckless hand tried to plant tares among it—what matters it? The great Husbandman has promised that whatever is planted in His name will, ultimately, bear fruit. The word of God never returns void. And He who has promised is faithful and true. Lift up your eyes and behold the stars of heaven—you cannot count them—so will be the fruit, if you only permit the seed to grow and develop gradually. Put your confidence in God. Look for the coming of King Messiah. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love it!"

BEN-ONIE'S

RELIGIOUS STRUGGLES.

CHAPTER V.

“Kennst du es wohl?”

—GOETHE.

“Cor nostrum inquietatum est, donec requiescat in Te.”

—ST. AUGUSTIN.

The clock of St. Martin's dome had just pealed forth the hour of midnight, when the stage-coach from Venlo, a city in the Province of L., entered the city of R. Among the passengers was BEN-ONIE. As he had neglected to inform the authorities of the Synagogue of the exact day of his arrival, no one was at the station to meet him. Therefore, considering the lateness of the hour, he decided to remain during the night at the hotel called, Lion D'or. The following morning he informed the President of the Parnasim⁽¹⁾ of his arrival, who immediately called on the new Rabbi. After the usual salutation, Mr. B.—thus was the President's name—invited him to take up his abode at his home, till he had found a place where he could reside. BEN-ONIE gratefully accepted this kind invitation, spending the first few days in visiting the members of

(1) Elders, or Wardens.

the congregation, amounting to about fifty families.

From the social position and the intellectual character of the Israelites in R., BEN-ONIE judged that he would find more pleasure and comfort among them than he had experienced among those of L. He was fortunate enough to make a good impression in R. and was quite happy that he could write to his parents that his congregation tried their utmost to show that they desired to treat the new Rabbi with such respect and veneration as is due to a Minister of religion. The authorities of the Synagogue, three in number, one a physician and the others lawyers, were true gentlemen, quite ready to render BEN-ONIE's position and work as comfortable and pleasant as he possibly could have expected. Far from sympathizing with Talmudic, or pharisaic Judaism, they belonged to the school of thought which has, during the last twenty years, so advanced in its rationalistic tendencies, that now it has almost lost every feature which was once specifically Jewish. It was clearly to be foreseen that, if ever any trouble would arise from BEN-ONIE's theological standpoint, it would certainly not originate from the authorities of the Synagogue. As for the rest of the Jews in R., I do not believe that more than five, or six families were advocates of the strict Rabbinical, or pharisaical school.

This difference between the Jews in R. and those in L. can be easily accounted for, if we bear in mind that the former city was the nearest, but one, to the German and Belgian boundaries. And as it is a well-known fact

that the Jews in those countries belong more, or less to the modern school of thought which is, nowadays, so predominant among the Israelites in this country, it follows that, on account of their daily intercourse as well as intermarriage with those of the above named countries, the Jews in R. have somewhat imbibed their liberal spirit, their more advanced culture and tolerant disposition. That BEN-ONIE was exceedingly grateful for this condition of things need not be mentioned. He himself does so, more than once, with characteristic joy and gratitude in his journal, expecting a life of peace and usefulness.

One of the most important and interesting departments of his work was here, as elsewhere, the religious instruction of the children. This was not left altogether to the Sunday-school which — it cannot be said too strongly — can do the work partly and, in most cases, imperfectly. It is the duty, the paramount duty, of the Minister, no matter to which church or denomination he belongs, to teach the lambs of his flock. He alone can do it as it should be done. He is responsible to God for it. In times past, it was he and he alone who was expected to teach the word of God to the children of his congregation⁽¹⁾ and,

(1) In the Netherlands and, I believe, in Germany too, the children already at a tender age, attend the catechizing school of the Clergymen to whose parish they belong, regularly once a week. This they continue to do for several years. In large cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Leyden, etc., where the duties of the Clergymen are of such a nature that they cannot possibly attend to all the children, which amount sometimes to several hundreds, there exists a class of men called Masters of Religion and Visitors of the Sick (Catechiseer-meesters and Zieken-bezoekers). They have only studied for these offices, are solemnly set apart for their work and receive such salary as is appointed by the church. For all their actions they are responsible to their respective Clergymen. They instruct those child-

if he now neglects this most important part of the work for which God Almighty has called him, he, himself, will have to bear the consequences of such unaccountable neglect.

As I remarked, BEN-ONIE took great interest in the religious instruction of the children—their number in R. was about sixty—and they very much appreciated the kindness of their spiritual teacher. They loved him and he loved them.

So far, then, as his work and congregation were concerned, BEN-ONIE could certainly have been satisfied in every respect. But something of a different nature was at the bottom of his unceasing disquietude. BEN-ONIE'S heart enjoyed no rest, his soul had no peace. He, indeed, believed in God—but this God was to him “afar off”—the distance almost immeasurable. He truly loved the Bible—but it was a mystery—a closed book. The history of Israel could awake in him a feeling of ecstasy, but this was of a transitory nature—it could give him no hope for the future. His Fathers had waited, patiently waited, for Israel's Messiah, but they have died without seeing even a glimpse of his appearance. Generation after generation have, both, entered and departed this life and—no change.

ren and visit those sick who are beyond the power of the Ministers to reach. The former, however, are, when duly prepared, together with those taught by the Clergymen, regularly examined by the latter in the presence of, at least, two elders immediately before confirmation.

I most earnestly and emphatically call the attention of the Christian Ministry in our country to the above fact, in order that something may be done to disseminate at least some biblical knowledge among those who intend to join the church, that they may know the reason for so doing it.

The thing that was, is now and no progress of happier times! What use was there to repeat every morning in the articles of faith: "I believe with a perfect conviction in the coming of the Messiah and, although he hesitates to come, yet do I expect every day that he will come?"⁽¹⁾ Moreover, some of the Rabbis have really admitted that the Messiah has come already but, seeing that the world was so bad, he thought it no use to stay! If this be so, what must become of Israel? What will be my hope?

Is it to be wondered that such and similar thoughts disturbed his peace in day, prevented his sleep in the night-season?

Indeed, BEN-ONIE had neither peace, nor rest. The natural joy of his heart was gone for the present. He took no interest whatever in social intercourse. Only in God could he find rest. But Him he knew not, although he was earnestly seeking Him. "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks," so BEN-ONIE'S soul was thirsting after the living God. The seed, which the clergyman of L. had cast into his heart, had taken root. More than ever he felt the necessity of seeking the truth. And in order to do this, he avoided everything which could be an obstacle in the way. He grasped the New Testament, which Mrs. K. had given him. He began to read. He wished to study it. But scarcely had he commenced this, when difficulties, like an insurmountable barrier, presented themselves before his mind.

(1) One of the thirteen articles of faith of which MAIMONIDES is the author.

If the result of his investigations would convince him that the Christian religion contains the truth; if it should be evident that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah for whose advent he had been longing, praying and thirsting—what would be his duty? To confess Him openly and become a Christian? But to forsake the Jewish religion, to leave the Synagogue and enter the Church was equivalent to forsaking parents, brothers, sisters and all those with whom he was connected by the tenderest ties of blood. Besides, how was he to notify them of this tremendous transformation of mind, and heart, and soul! How would they receive the fatal message? What effect would it have on his aged parents? God alone could tell! It would forever bereave them of peace, of joy, of happiness. Would they not hate him instead of love him, not curse him instead of bless him?

Such were the thoughts which crossed his mind, which continually appeared before his excited imagination, which fearfully tormented him when, in the midnight hour, he was studying the writings of the ancient Prophets.

Sometimes he would gaze at a certain point, seemingly aimless. Again, he would talk to his mother, argue with his father, as though they were present!

Under the pressure of such mental labor, one could see him tremble like a reed, while the cold perspiration was streaming down his pale cheeks. He, then, would commence to weep bitterly and, falling on his knees, pour

out his oppressed heart in prayer unto the God of his Fathers.

When this condition of things had lasted about one year, BEN-ONIE, literally exhausted in body and soul, became prostrated. His mental struggles had completely overwhelmed him. His medical advisers had ordered him to lay aside for a while all studies; earnestly admonishing him to take a long vacation and go home. BEN-ONIE, however, could not follow this advice. It was impossible for him to suspend his studies, as the welfare of his after God panting soul depended on them; nor could he, for reasons which need not be explained, visit his parents. For two months, however, he abstained from all official labor, and this period of rest seemed salutary and sufficient to restore somewhat his former strength and tranquillity. As soon as he could do so, he resumed his studies and began to read zealously the Gospels, comparing Scripture with Scripture. This altogether kept him from visiting his people. For, not only this laborious work demanded all his spare time, but he judged that all intercourse with Jewish families would be unadvisable.

As was, however, to be expected, BEN-ONIE had a relapse. His mental struggles had again undermined his health and strength in such a manner, that he became an object of pity. Some thought his illness due to consumption, others to heart disease. But everyone sympathized with the young Rabbi, whose appearance, in those days, indicated that the thread of life would soon snap asunder. It was indeed, a source of gratitude to see how his peo-

ple vied with each other in administering kindness and comfort. Even his pupils tried their utmost to show how dear he was to them. And yet all these tokens of sympathy and love were calculated to increase the agony of the sufferer. They certainly tended to intensify the relations between Pastor and people, and to cause the separation, which was ultimately unavoidable, to become extremely painful, if not altogether impossible. The very thought that the same dear friends, who now overwhelmed him with kindness and love, would afterwards hate and curse him, was intolerable. BEN-ONIE felt this deeply. It startled him. It made him miserable, most miserable. He found himself in a position wherein he could go neither backward, nor forward. He had lost faith in Judaism and gained but little light in Christianity. The peace of his heart—he thought—had left him forever. Religion had consolation for everyone, but him. In former days his heart rejoiced whenever Israel's feast-days were at hand—now he shrunk back at the approach of the same, as though they were hideous spectres! To ascend the steps of the Synagogue was once the delight of his soul—now they seemed to him little better than the steps to the scaffold! Judaism had for him no more attractions, and the blessings of Christianity were to him yet far in the distance; like stars high up in the firmament, like dreams to him who sleeps. His future seemed like a dark night without a single constellation to relieve its gloom! Woefully tortured, on account of the anguish of his soul and mind, we find the youthful

sufferer, in a dark and stormy night, two miles from the city, prostrate in the field under a large chestnut tree!—

Listen, he prays—

“Merciful Father, leave me, ah, leave me not forever separated from Thee! O Thou tremendous One, Jehovah-God, let, O let, the morning star, once more, shine on my solitary path? It is dark, dark around me. Show me, once more, Thy friendly countenance. Light, O my God, light!—Leave not Thy child in the dark shadow of death!—”

Not a single star illumined the doleful scene. The wind howled and sounded like funeral wailings. Occasionally a rain-shower, mingled with hail, would descend from the burdened clouds. It seemed as if the very elements of nature had conspired against the night-wanderer, as if even heaven and earth had united to bring him to utter despair!

Thus it seemed.

But He, whose eyes are never closed, looked down with compassion on his weeping and trembling child. And from the sound of a thunderbolt, which rolled in the distance, BEN-ONIE understood his Father’s answer :

“Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine!”⁽¹⁾

(1) Isaiah 43: 1.

VICTORY.

CHAPTER VI.

“To whom God will, there be the victory.”

Suppose we cross the market-square in the city of R. diagonally, then proceed in a straight line; we would arrive at a street where neither the rich, nor the very poor are in the habit of calling. The dwellings there make no pretense of beauty and those who live in them, do not boast of wealth which they do not possess. It is that portion of the city where small dealers, mechanics and others, belonging to the laboring class, are eking out some kind of a living. Among these humble houses which are rather interesting to behold on account of their quaint and varied appearance, is one which particularly calls our attention. It looks so clean, so peaceful. One would almost come to the conclusion that those, who occupy it, belong to the well-to-do class and care little, or nothing what goes on outside. The curtains before the windows were always down, and conspicuously neat and clean. You never saw anyone sitting at the window, and never anyone going in, or out of the door. Even the nearest neighbors could give no other information than that the mysterious dwelling

was occupied by a very old woman and a young girl of about twelve years. Who the old lady was, whence she came and how she made her living—in spite of all investigations which the neighbors had not been slow in instituting, was and remained a secret. Of course there was the customary surmising—one thought that the woman had plenty of money and, being afraid that thieves might enter, kept everything, in and around the house, securely locked. Another thought that she had lost her wealth, and now secretly worked at some trade for her daily bread, and was too proud to show it openly; a position the neighbors vehemently condemned, since, they judged, that one who is poor must not be proud! Again others, who were of a credulous mind, certified, in all soberness, that the old woman was a witch who, at times, had intercourse with the devil. They went even so far as to say, that they had noticed some strange apparitions issue from the solitary chimney! This was certain, they did not feel much inclination to approach the haunted house, but remained rather at a respectful distance; while the rest of the neighbors, who could not believe very well all that was told of those nocturnal visitations, yet showed very little desire to make her acquaintance.

For—thus these sober-minded people reasoned—it is not altogether impossible that she holds intercourse with the Evil One and, in that case, it would be far better to let her alone.

And what is your idea, kind reader? I am

standing at the door, ready to enter the humble dwelling. I will honestly confess that I am not in the least afraid, because I do not believe what the good people are kind enough to tell. And if you are of the same opinion, then I invite you, very courteously, to follow me. I warrant you, not a hair of your head will be injured.

Being admitted, we find ourselves at a small and narrow hall. We notice a door to the left. This being opened, we enter a small but very clean room. Things are exceedingly plain here; no trace whatever of former luxury. A square table, which is covered with a cloth which, from its appearance, must have served as such for more than one generation, stands in the center. Two chairs of an antique style, and a picture, representing "JOSEPH sold by his brethren," hanging on a whitewashed wall, is all the furniture which the room contains. In the corner towards the East, there are a few stairs, and these we shall ascend. They are only a few and lead to the second, or highest story of the house. It is simply the attic. Here is a little room, the walls of which are made of linen, covered with paper. There we shall find the occupants of the house. Let us enter. Don't be afraid—the burning lamp is only a substitute for the daylight, which finds no entrance here. See, the little girl opens the door. That, which first attracts our attention, is an old mattress. On it lies an old woman who seems to sleep somewhat restlessly. To judge from her general appearance, we conclude that she is ill; and though her face is pale and care-worn, yet her noble

features are very prominent. A sweet smile plays around her lips, which indicate that peace dwells in her heart. While she slumbers, we will cast a look around us. A little wooden table stands in the center of the small room. On it is the burning lamp and a bottle of medicine. The little girl of twelve years old, reclined on a bench, is busy knitting. Her eyes are filled with tears. Poor child! From time to time she casts a look, now on the sick woman, then at the clock standing on a shelf. Opposite her, on an old chair, sits a young gentleman, reading in a book. Since he holds it close to his eyes, partly because he seems to be near-sighted, and partly because the lamp gives but a dim light, we can give no better description of him than that he seems to be a clergyman.

What a sad picture does this room exhibit! How lamentably poor! How pitiably miserable! Poverty, in its worst form, seems to have selected this lonely place as its principal abode. Besides, the angel of death stands at the door ready to enter at any time, when he feels so disposed. What a touching scene!

While we are gazing at the misery, which surrounds us, in profound pity, the clock of St. Martin's announces the hour of three. The deep and penetrating tones of the Cathedral-bell awake the sick woman, and us, too, out of our serious meditations.

"REBECCA,"—this is the name of the child—"is this the hour to take my medicine?" inquired the sick person.

"Yes, dear grandma"—replied the child—"the proper time is already past, but you were

sleeping so well, that I hesitated to awake you."

"That was right my darling, and quite thoughtful," said the sick woman. "The sleep has refreshed and enabled me to speak; and I have many things to say before I die. Now give me the medicine; and although I believe it will scarcely do me any good, yet it is our duty to use all means which God has given. We dare not neglect them."

REBECCA knelt down at the mattress and, having administered the medicine, she exclaimed: *Rephuah shelehmah!*"⁽¹⁾

"Why do you weep, my child," inquired the sufferer, seeing the tears rolling down the child's face, "why do you weep? In doing so, you cannot prolong my life one single minute; no, you rather shorten it. I don't like to see you shedding tears, darling. My time is come. I have already over-reached the allotted period. If I live to-morrow, I shall be seventy-five years old. We have no right to ask for more."

"O dear grandma," answered the child, hardly able to suppress her emotion, "it is not only that which causes me so much sorrow; but seeing you lie there on straw, without sufficient covering, and no money in the house to prepare a little broth, then I cannot but cry, though I know this will not change your condition. I wish also to buy something for your birthday; but you told me, not to touch the money which is laid aside to pay house-rent."

"Listen, my own darling," said the aged

(1) רפואה שלמה—"A perfect cure to you!" A pious ejaculation when medicine is administered.

woman making an effort to raise herself on her mattress, "Listen, do not disturb yourself on my account. I shall soon need neither food, nor covering. As for my birthday to-morrow—ah, yes, you will certainly make for me something—my shroud! But tell me, darling, did you send for that gentleman whom I so anxiously desire to see before I die? Did you, REBECCA?"

Her eyes being almost dim, it was impossible to discriminate the objects in the little room.

"Yes, dear grandma, I did, and the gentleman to whom you allude, is already here."

The young gentleman, whom we saw reading, arose, approached the sick-bed and said kindly: "I was informed that you desired to see me and, therefore, I have hastened to gratify you."

"I appreciate your kindness, sir, God bless you for it," said the woman.

"As I am a perfect stranger to you," resumed the gentleman, "I am indeed anxious to know in what way I can serve you."

"You will soon know," replied the woman, "but before I commence to tell my story, you will be kind enough to promise me solemnly that, for three years to come, you will keep secret whatever I tell you?"

Without the least hesitation the gentleman promised that he would respect her request, placing, at her desire, his hand on the Bible. This being done, she told REBECCA to leave the room, and the gentleman having placed his chair immediately before the sick-bed, the woman commenced her narrative thus:

“I am the only daughter of a wealthy banker. My father lived strictly according to the precepts of the Talmud and, as my mother died when I was scarcely four years old, he put me under the care of a governess, whose religion was of the same type as that of my father. Hence I grew up, a strict Jewish woman, walking in the footsteps of my father and following the example of my teacher. I became a bigot, for which I was more than once rebuked by my brother, whose religion was rather of the modern school. When I had reached the age of twenty, I was married to a gentleman who had no religious principles whatever. My husband’s indifference towards all religious exercises had a detrimental influence on me. He introduced me into the gayest society. He accompanied me to theatres, concerts, balls and—I must confess—I was at first by no means indifferent to such a life. I became devoted to it. I truly loved it. I heartily enjoyed it. I drank deep from the cup that was put into my hands. After a few years, however, I began to lose interest in such a life. I had had too much of it, and felt something of what follows a repast on sweets. Often I went to places of amusement with but little desire; not because I considered it wrong, or inconsistent with my religious principles, no, not at all. You know, one can be a very pious Jew, and yet enjoy all the pleasures of the world. But I was satisfied; yes I became satiated. I felt no more pleasure in them. My husband, however, not only continued those pleasures, but enjoyed others of a less innocent character, which, at first,

caused some dissensions in our home and later disturbed our peace altogether. Neither prayers, nor tears; no, not even threatenings were of any avail. On the contrary, they were an incentive to give his passions free play. At last he did openly what he had done secretly; arousing the indignation of his associates and superiors in the Bank of which he was cashier. When all the admonitions of my father and others were in vain, he was finally dismissed from his office. I had a slight hope that this would have a good effect. Though my husband was now without income, yet we did not suffer, for my good father provided for our necessities, notwithstanding his aversion to my husband. My daughter was then nine years of age. She was my only child. At first my husband, indeed, reformed somewhat, and his conduct justified the hope that soon he would become an honorable husband and kind father. But, alas, all our hopes were blighted? He commenced again his carousing life, and indulged in his revelings more than ever. You can easily perceive, sir, what my sufferings were. But this was not the only sorrow I had to endure. Dark clouds gathered over my father's head and threatened him with ruinous disaster. The general business being at that time at a complete stagnation, many large houses closed and suspended payment. Blow upon blow compelled my father to follow in their footsteps. On a certain morning my father ran into my room, threw himself on a chair and cried out: 'REBECCA, my child, I am a ruined man.' I did all I could to soothe his

sorrows but, as I absolutely knew not how to comfort, I was unsuccessful. In such cases the Jewish religion does not offer many consolations. I feared that these calamities would prey on my poor father's mind. From that moment we were compelled to change the way of our daily life. Costly things in the house were gradually sold. My husband cared for nothing; he only continued his dissipated life with less expenses—it is true—but with increased danger to himself. It was impossible for me to think of the future without anxiety and sorrow. However unfortunate I was, I had not lost courage until the 15th of August. That day was the most miserable of my life. I can never forget it. It was then, sir, that my father, my poor father, driven to despair, committed suicide. Being informed of this calamity, I was unable to bear up longer. This terrible blow crushed me. For more than four weeks I lay unconscious on my sick-bed. What happened during that time I know not, but when I was so far restored to health that I was able to recognize those who surrounded my couch, I missed, both, my brother and my husband. For a few days they succeeded in keeping me ignorant of the reason of their absence. But when, at last, I insisted on knowing it, I was informed that both had died—my brother from cholera morbus, and my husband as the victim of his dissipations. Thus in a few weeks I had become an orphan, a widow and—poor! All I possessed was my child, my only child. It was then that I gave utterance to the despairing cry: 'Call me not NAOMI; call me MARA;

for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.'”(1)

Here the unfortunate woman, covering her face with her hands to hide her tears, remained silent. She was exhausted. After several minutes she resumed:

“When I was convalescent, the first thing I did was to see how much was left me in clothing, furniture, etc. With the assistance of a friend, I succeeded in selling all that was superfluous, and the little sum which the sale yielded, was, considering the condition I was in, not small. I left the city and went with my daughter to a distant village, whence I returned only recently, and succeeded, by sewing and similar handwork, in providing for our immediate wants. There being no Jews in that village, we were altogether left to ourselves. No one visited us; of course not—we belonged to the poor! In this way we lived several years peaceably and were satisfied, working for our daily bread. It was, however, well that I kept the money, which the sale of my furniture yielded, carefully under lock and key, because the villagers did not always provide us with work, and then that money kept us from starvation. Especially was this the case when my daughter entered the married state; her husband being not a rich but an honest salesman. The sun of prosperity, however, had ceased to shine for me. Before the former wounds were healed, another was inflicted on me. When the little girl, you saw at my bedside, was but three

(1) Ruth 1: 20.

days old, her mother closed her eyes and left us forever. Broken-hearted I followed the bier of my child, my only child. Her husband, who was devotedly attached to his wife, took this affliction so much to heart that, before another year had elapsed, he too departed this life. I buried them side by side.

"I have sometimes asked myself, sir, how a poor woman could bear all this. Happy are we that we are unable to lift the curtain, that veils the future, from our gaze. We would not be able to bear it, were we to know how heavy the cross is, which the Almighty lays upon our feeble shoulders. Our misfortune, however, is that we are too blind to see God's hand in our afflictions; that we are too dull to perceive that God 'chasteneth those whom he loveth.'⁽¹⁾ I learned it afterwards, but paid dearly for the lessons, which my heavenly Father taught me. Woe to me that I know them even yet but partly! We are slow to listen, sir, slow to learn and slower still to follow. I confess it with a penitent heart, sir, I was no exception to this rule. I lived indifferently in this world. For me—I thought—there is no more joy, no more prosperity, no more hope—a few more strokes and I, too, shall sink into the same grave where those, who were once dear to me, are now resting!—Thus a few years passed by, when I made the acquaintance of a woman who, on account of her lovely manners, became very interesting to me. She was a very pious Christian, who delighted to speak of Israel's

(1) Revel. III: 19.

glory which was past, and of that glory which shall be, when the Lord God shall gather his people from the four corners of the earth to bring them back to Jerusalem. At first I did not understand her sufficiently to appreciate it, and often wished, she would put an end to that kind of conversation. When, on a certain day, she mentioned the name of Him, who is an abomination to Israel, admonishing me to search the Scriptures and to investigate the reason why, and for what great sin the Israelites have been exiles longer than they ever were a separate nation in their own land, my indignation was so great, my passion so excited, my anger so kindled, that, taking a glass of water from the table I flung it in her face!—Scarcely had I perpetrated this crime, when I was, in my heart, really and truly sorry, very sorry for it. I expected an outburst of indignation and contempt. But I was surprised. She quietly took her handkerchief and wiped her face, and her tears too—for the good woman had wept—and said with a voice characterized by the utmost tenderness which cut me to the heart: ‘REBECCA, may God forgive you as I do,’ and—turning left the house. I stood as if nailed to the floor; in which position I, certainly, remained half an hour. So much love for so much unkindness!—so much sympathy for so much baseness!—so much large-heartedness for so much meanness!—that was to me an insoluble problem, incomprehensible in whatever light I took it. This thought touched my heart. I began to perceive what I had done. I began to feel ashamed. I abhorred myself. I was

completely conquered—by kindness, sir, by magnanimity of soul, by greatness of heart, by sublime patience!

“In this condition I ran to her house, to cast myself at her feet and to beg her forgiveness. But, when I arrived, she was not at home. I retired for the night, but could not sleep. The following morning I sent REBECCA to her with the request to come immediately. She did come. Scarcely had she entered, when I cast myself at her feet, crying: ‘Pardon, dearest friend, pardon!’ My emotion did not permit me to say more. But my noble friend bade me rise and, embracing me, said: ‘REBECCA, what you have done was simply natural. It would have been foolish, had I been offended. I was sorry, REBECCA, very sorry, but convinced that, what I did, I did it in a lawful and honorable way. At the same time I besought God that He might forgive you and, lo! he has heard my prayer—your repentance plainly shows it.’”

“After that memorable event, I willingly listened to her whenever she explained the way of God with mankind. She instructed me in the whole council of God. Every hour which we could spend for that purpose, we utilized for reading the Holy Scriptures; and whatever seemed to me of a difficult nature she, on account of her being more experienced in the way of God, knew how to put it in such a light that I could comprehend it more readily. You have no idea what a happy time we spent in thus edifying one another. Alas, alas! she too was torn away from my side. Scarcely had we been one year together, when

she was summoned home. REBECCA and I were among those who stood at her death-bed. 'No you must not weep,' said she, seeing my tears. 'I have lived long enough to know that every hour allotted to us is mercy. On your account I could have wished to live a little longer, because I judge, you still need my assistance. Henceforth the Holy Ghost will be your Instructor. I beg of you, REBECCA, to pray the Father for this Illuminator. Prayer is the best means by which we learn to know our God and to keep away the evil one.' A few more words she spoke, but so inaudibly that I could not very well make out their meaning. And when she once more had smiled at me, gently pressing my hand, she went to God, the Father whom she had loved and served in truth and sincerity.

"More than ever did I feel my utter loneliness. But, on the other hand, I had a feeling to which I had, hitherto, been a stranger; a feeling which convinces us that our Father sees us, and hears us, and guides us, and helps us. But even that, however comfortable, is not altogether satisfactory to him who, by the inspiration of God's spirit, has obtained knowledge of his own heart, and who knows that that heart is in constant rebellion against God. See, dear sir, it is that knowledge which compels him to throw aside all pride, and all conceit. So far it must come with us, before we look out for redemption and salvation! And this inestimable benefit is granted to me, the most unworthy hand-maiden of the Lord! The God of mercy and love graciously opened my eyes, and I

saw the chasm between Him, the Holy and pure God—and me, the poor and miserable sinner. Then cried I unto the God of my life day and night. I continued in prayer. I wrestled with Him, saying with father JACOB: ‘I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.’⁽¹⁾ And, behold, God answered. There came light. To me, sir, to me, the abandoned, sorely tried woman, the God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB, the God of life and love granted mercy and forgiveness; not because there was in me anything that justly merited it, but because I sought it, sir, through Him, in whom I, long since, had believed and in whose name and spirit I had learned to offer up my imperfect prayers—I obtained it in Jesus Christ!’

“You believe then in Him, who was condemned by Israel and crucified? You are a baptized Jewess and sent for me simply to inform me thereof?” remarked the gentleman somewhat surprised.

“Please have patience, sir. Don’t interrupt me,” begged the aged, sick woman. “I feel my strength rapidly declining, and I have yet to add a few words. I recollected that my friend sometimes spoke of a very aged Christian gentleman whom she venerated. She visited him seldom, because his age did not permit his indulging in multiplied conversations. I judged, however, that he would not object, if I were to call once, in order to tell him that, in Jesus Christ, I had found Israel’s Messiah, and that in consequence thereof, I wished to be baptized in His blessed name. I

(1) Gen. 32: 26.

did accordingly. At first, the aged man was not inclined to trust me altogether. But when I had told my story and showed him that I had not built my salvation on sand, he felt more interest in me and was quite ready to give me advice. His judgment was that I should take a little more time before submitting myself to baptism. 'Take more time,' said he, 'for, once being baptized, you will be continually annoyed by those who seem always anxious to know how you became a Christian. They are always ready to look for the mote in your eye, but are absolutely blind as to the beam in their own.' It seemed to me that this aged servant of Christ spoke words of truth; I decided to follow his advice; also on account of my granddaughter who, although having learned a little of me, yet is still far from the way on which I—thank God—am permitted to walk and the limits of which I hope soon to reach. As soon as I shall have departed this life, REBECCA will be alone in the world. No relatives, no friends, no means, but poor and naked—the little lamb will perish, unless God provides some kind friend, who will interest himself in her behalf. And sir," said she with an almost supernatural voice, "God has appointed you as the man who will look after REBECCA. Take her and help her. I bequeath that precious child to you, sir, in the name of the God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB! Be kind to the poor orphan and He, who is the Father of orphans, shall reward and bless you!"

The poor woman, who had made an extraor-

dinary effort to utter the last sentences, fell back on her pillow exhausted.

The gentleman, far from being offended, was, both, surprised and touched. He bent himself over the sick woman, and, gently whispered in her ear: "Dear madam, whatever I can do for your granddaughter shall be done willingly and cheerfully. With God's help she will be provided for. But in regard to yourself—do you need anything? What can I do for you? I give you the most solemn assurance that I have only good will towards you. I deeply respect your religious views. I am profoundly interested in your life, and hope that your faith may be a comfort to you in the hour of trial. Tell me, shall I send for a Christian Minister? It seems to me that you have but few hours at your disposal."

"A peaceful smile, playing around the half-opened mouth, was the only answer. When a few more minutes had elapsed, she said: "Yes, I—should—like—to be—baptized."

The gentleman went instantly to summon a Clergyman. Having arrived at his house and being admitted into the presence of Dominus⁽¹⁾ P., he explained the reason of his call. I am sorry, however, to state that the reverend gentleman requested to be excused; first, because he was "quite busy" and, moreover, the sick person did not belong to his district.⁽²⁾

(1) This is a Latin word and means properly "lord." The Hollanders address their Ministers: "Domine: My lord," equivalent to the French: "Mon Seigneur."

(2) In Holland, a parish often contains several Churches, which are administered by as many Clergymen in regular order. The parish is divided into as many districts as there are Ministers, to each of whom is assigned a district over which he exercises pastoral care.

As he, however, wished to facilitate matters he promised to send a Catechist.⁽¹⁾

It seemed certainly strange to the young gentleman that Dominus P. did not show more zeal in this case. He had supposed that the Clergyman would have followed him instantly. When he, however, was informed that Dominus P. belonged to the ultra-rationalistic school, he was no longer surprised. He called on a physician who accompanied him directly.

When, for sometime, both gentlemen had returned to the bedside of the old lady, some one knocked at the door. This being opened, a tall, slim gentleman, with a disagreeable appearance entered the room. It was the Catechist. With a pedantry, often so common to that class of people, he approached the patient and, with a voice which betrayed his pride, he asked:

"Have you filed your letter-dimissory at the office of the sexton?"

The poor woman did not answer simply because, at the time, she was in an unconscious condition. In the meanwhile the young gentleman looked at the Teacher of Religion with a look which indicated, that he understood neither his question, nor his unseemly conduct towards a dying person. The physician, however, more accustomed to such scenes, informed the Catechist that his patient was a Jewess and thus a "dimissory-letter was, wholly, out of the question!"

(1) See Page 69, Note 1.

"A Jewess," said he, "well, in that case I have no business here whatever; I am at a loss to know, why Dominus P. sends me hither."

"No business whatever," replied the young gentleman, somewhat sharply. "Neither do I see why Dominus P. has sent you!"

"I have the honor to bid you good-by, gentlemen!"

"Good-by, sir," was the reply; and the Christian teacher, the instructor of the Law and the Gospel turned, and went his way.

A moment of silence intervened. Finally the Physician remarked: "Did the Minister expect to gain a soul?"

"Not at all, not at all," was the gentleman's reply.

The physician wrote a prescription, laid it on the table and said: "Every quarter of an hour a teaspoonful; I believe, however, she will not need it any more." He examined once more the pulse and remarking: "She will scarcely pull through the night," left the room also, leaving the young gentleman alone with the dying woman.

The child REBECCA who, till now, had been absent, had, at his request, returned. The poor child commenced to weep. Her grandmother heard it, for she opened her eyes.

"Do you wish anything, dearest grandmother?" asked the little child with that sympathetic voice so natural to near relatives. Only a faint pressure of the hand was the answer. It was evident that her last hour was come. Ten minutes passed without any visible change. Afterwards her face became more pallid and the usual perspiration

began to gather about the eyebrows. Once more she stretched out her hand, indicating that she desired to lay it on the child's head. REBECCA understood this, and the poor orphan received the last blessing of the only one whom, on earth, she knew and loved. It was a solemn scene. It deeply touched the heart of the young gentleman. Making an extraordinary effort, she opened her lips and stammered: "Sir—I die—your vow—God—bless—Jesus—come——mercy——" A groan—another——and REBECCA was no more—God had taken her!

Two days later one could see a plain hearse, drawn by an old gray horse, hurriedly rolling along N. street in the direction of the city cemetery. No one preceded and no one followed.

It was the funeral procession of old REBECCA.

"Who is going to be buried?" asked a servant-girl of an ugly-looking woman, whose sole business evidently was to watch those who passed to and fro.

"Well, don't you know that?" was the shrill answer, "it is the mysterious woman who lived in N. street, whom nobody ever could get a sight of. That she was a witch, there is no mistake. Everybody believed it. It is said that the devil strangled her," and, saying this, she made the sign of the cross!

Towards midnight we notice a young gentleman leaving the city gate. He goes in the direction of the cemetery. The weather was mild and calm. The moon shone solemnly on the God's-acre. Who is he that, at such a late hour in the night, visits the silent city of the dead? It is the same gentleman, whose acquaintance we made at the death-bed of REBECCA. In his right hand he holds some choice flowers. Lo, he reverently places them on REBECCA's grave. He kneels down: "Sleep calmly," thus he speaks, "sleep calmly till the day, when God's angel shall blow the last trump. And, when before the judgment-seat, we shall appear to be judged, then, O pious soul, then shalt thou bless me also, for I believe in Him, in whom thou didst believe—I believe in Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah and King!"

This young gentleman, reader, was—BEN-ONIE!

The first part of the drama is finished. For some time we drop the curtain. When we raise it again, three years have passed.

Numberless graves will have been dug in thee for the good as well as the bad, O patient earth! Thou grantest the same freedom to the one, as to the other. Thou makest no difference. But God's all-seeing eye will never cease to behold them. He will know how to discriminate between the two.

PARENTAL SORROW.

CHAPTER VII.

“Those that can pity, here
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear;
The subject will deserve it.”

(1) “Och d’ouders telen ’t kind en brengen ’t groot met smart;
Het kleine treedt op’t kleed, de groote op’t hart!”

—J. VAN VONDEL.

Several years have elapsed since we were last in the home of Rabbi BARUCH and NAOMI. Let us now return to these truly good people. So far as the Rabbi’s residence, both outwardly and inwardly, is concerned, we notice no change whatever. He, as well as his faithful wife, were of an extremely conservative nature. One thing, however, comes within our observation as soon as we enter, namely: That the peace, which was formerly so evident in the family, had for the greater part deserted this otherwise so peaceful home. Gloominess had taken its place. In a corner

(1) I thought best to give Vondel’s charming words in their original language. Here is the literal translation:

“Ah! parents beget the child, and bring it up with care—

The infant treads on the lap, the fullgrown on the heart!”

J van Vondel was one of Holland’s greatest poets and almost a contemporary of Milton whom he, as a poet most resembles. They are kindred spirits.

of the room we notice R. BARUCH, sitting in an easy chair, looking constantly into the fire which burned briskly in the open fire-place. If we look at him more attentively, we notice the furrows on his forehead, which age, as well as care, have ploughed there. From time to time he gives vent to a heavy sigh, which is evidently a manifestation of his burdened mind. NAOMI sits near the window, occupied with her needlework. She looks pale. We see plainly the traces of tears, the noble mother must have shed not long before. At her feet sits the youngest child, a little boy of about ten years, learning his French lesson.

Opposite R. BARUCH sits a gentleman, a rabbi who resides in the neighborhood. He, too, seems buried in thought, seeking how to solve the problem which apparently is uppermost in his mind.

A painful silence, interrupted only by R. BARUCH'S heavy sighing, rules supreme. This condition lasts, until the door of the room opens, when one enters, who figures as reader and cantor in the little Synagogue of the town. The appearance of this man is a perfect index of his character. He is extremely tall, and remarkably thin. In striking contrast is his large head, covered with a silk hat, which must have done service to his grandfather. As he is too pious to uncover his head,⁽¹⁾ we shall have the pleasure of looking at that object of antiquity for some length of time. The

¹(1) A strictly orthodox Jew will nowhere appear with uncovered head; a mistaken interpretation of the Talmudic words קלות ראש rather: lightminded, impudent etc.

The hair of his head and beard is red, while a pair of small gray eyes plainly indicate the pharisaic and treacherous character of the tallest, thinnest and most fanatic Jew I ever met.

After saluting those present, he took a chair and, placing it in the immediate vicinity of the visiting rabbi, said:

"It's cold, Rabbi!" rubbing his large, not overclean hands.

"Indeed it is cold," replied the rabbi without paying much attention to him.

Again silence prevailed for a few minutes.

As the Cantor whom we, for the sake of convenience, will call "BEN-JUDAS," wished, at any price, to turn the conversation to the fact that R. BARUCH's eldest son desired to embrace the Christian religion, he said: "I shouldn't wonder, if this wicked boy, by his infamous act, should kill his aged parents."

No one answered.

"Were he my son," continued BEN-JUDAS, "I certainly would know what to do."

"Pray, what would you do?" inquired R. BARUCH.

"I should order'm home and, either, convert'm or kill'm!" replied the fanatic Reader.

Rabbi BARUCH looked into the fire and sighed.

"And do you really believe," remarked the visiting rabbi, "that, in treating him thus, you would succeed? Beside, that is not the way to act towards one who is of age. Moreover, I do not think that God would be pleased with your system; and, above all, it would plainly demonstrate that your faith can be defended

by rage and force, instead of reason and love."

"Rabbi," replied BEN-JUDAS warmly, "if I did not know you, I would certainly believe you were half of a Meshummad!"⁽¹⁾

"I care little what your opinion of me is," was the indignant answer of R. AKIBA—this was his name—"God knows that I am a good Israelite, and that I lament, as well as you do, when a Jew becomes a renegade. But I did not come to this house to rage and scold, but to converse with R. BARUCH, and with him alone—you understand me, I hope—as to what means we shall employ to bring his son, who is my friend, to better and holier thoughts."

This answer pleased R. BARUCH very much.

"Yes, indeed, dear friend," said he, "you are quite right; we shall reason with my son, and, if this be of no avail, then shall I with my poor wife kneel at his feet and say to him: 'Son, do not bring down our gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Have mercy on your aged father and mother!'" And saying this, the good rabbi began to weep bitterly.

NAOMI arose and, placing her hand on her husband's shoulder said: "Rabbi BARUCH how oft have you admonished us to put our trust always in God? It seems as if now our time is come to exhort you to rely, for help, on the God of our Fathers! He will never permit that BEN-ONIE, for whom we have sacrificed so much, shall ever forsake the religion of his parents. Although I must confess that,

(1) משכר — "Spiritual Suicide"—a very common expression among Jews to designate a baptized Israelite

sometimes, I feel as if my heart is sinking within me, yet I have hope that the touching letters which we sent to him, may induce our son to change his opinions. No, no; BEN-ONIE becoming a Christian—it is impossible! He knows the Law of MOSES too well, and must be convinced that Christianity is a false religion!”

“Dear NAOMI,” sighed R. BARUCH, “how little knowest thou BEN-ONIE.⁽¹⁾ I believe, on the contrary, that, when our son has once desired to do a certain thing, he will accomplish it. I shall, nevertheless, try to use all means to prevent such a calamity, though I doubt, whether I shall succeed. Remember what he wrote only two days ago: ‘My conviction is not of to-day, nor of yesterday, but the fruit of long study and earnest prayer.’ O my God,” cried the broken-hearted father, “why did I live to witness this affliction! Why did he not die at his birth? Why did he not yield the ghost at the moment he saw the first beam of the sun? Or, why does not our God call him unto Himself, before he denies the Law of MOSES? Gone is the joy of my heart—gone forever! Not a single hour of happiness will ever dawn for me. No Sabbath, nor feast-day, will ever gladden my heart. Henceforth, I dare no more appear in the Synagogue. No calamity could be more severe. The crown is fallen from my head! My own son has aimed at my heart! The Almighty has

(1) It cannot be denied that NAOMI could not comprehend the enormity of her misfortune. She did not realize it half as much as her husband; hence her tranquillity. When, however, everything was accomplished, then, and not till then, the tender-loving mother, alas! so completely gave way to her sorrows that, within two years, she departed this life.

dealt very bitterly with me. In this place I shall spend the residue of my life lonely and miserable. Here shall I mourn and weep, till death relieves me. Then shall I lay down my weary head, covered with shame; and all who will pass by the spot where I sleep will say: 'Here lies the man, whose son was a disgrace to all Israel!' O, my God, my God, be merciful unto me and my poor wife!"

Neither NAOMI, nor R. AKIBA could control their tears. Both gave ready vent to their emotion. Only BEN-JUDAS was immovable. The sadness of the broken-hearted parents might have moved the flinty rock to pity, but not him. It seemed to make no impression whatever on his icy heart. No, he was rather offended, especially at NAOMI who, as a mother, could entertain such good expectations in regard to her son. It would have pleased him, if R. BARUCH and his wife had pronounced a terrible anathema over their own child. How gladly would he have listened, had the Rabbi exclaimed: "May all the curses, which are written in the book of the Law, descend on the head of my son!" The bigoted pharisee would then have heartily said: "Amen." He, now, was meditating how he could aim one more dart at the heart of the already sorely tried parents. He was not long in finding it.

"R. BARUCH," said he, "you know, I have always respected your son, though I must confess, I never fully trusted him; for you know, I am a thorough Jew. I will, however, explain the reason for calling on you. I returned yesterday from the city of Amsterdam where your son lives and where, by the way,

I did considerable business! Just at the moment I left the wholesale firm of R., I met the very worthy Chief-Rabbi of D. He hadn't the honor to know me! But he wished some information about the locality of the city. I offered him my company, which he gratefully accepted. I was pleased to have an opportunity to do a good work; for the Talmud says, that: 'He who does a kind act to a Rabbi, will be rewarded as though he did it to God himself.' And while we walked together, I told him the affliction with which you are visited when, at once, he stood still, clasped his hands together and exclaimed: 'I am not surprised; I expected it!'

"'But,' said I, 'honored Rabbi, are you not astonished when an Israelite becomes a me-shummad?'"⁽¹⁾

"'Understand me well,' replied the pious rabbi,—God bless him, amen!—stamping the ground with his foot, 'understand well what I say: I do not wonder at the result of this evil-minded rabbi. I observed him when he was being examined. He, then, was already accused of being a Posh Yisrael.'⁽²⁾ I did whatever I could to have him rejected, because I was convinced that he would deceive the people and sow stray seed in the hearts of Israel's children. But I was powerless. The Chief-Rabbi of O., who is a German, and the Germans belong to the modern school, said much in his favor and protected him. Alas, we yielded, but I protested and had fully determined, if ever I had an opportunity to warn

(1) See Page 100, Note 1.

(2) Heretic.

the people of Israel against him, I would not hesitate to do so.

“‘A few years ago, he had a charge in my district. I promptly informed his congregation, and the good people acted towards him according to my advice—thank Heaven for it!—in such a manner that, the first call he obtained, he left and went to R., where the greater part of the Jews are, either, Germans or French and, dogmatically, not much better than he.—And is it then really true that he is about to become a pervert?’

“‘Yes, honored Rabbi. yes, it is really the truth,’” I answered.

“‘Well,’ said the Chief-Rabbi, ‘may, on his head, descend the sorrow of all Israel, and a sudden death be his reward.’”

“I tried for your sake, R. BARUCH, to persuade him to visit and, if possible, to prevent your son from becoming a meshummad; but he peremptorily refused. He would, under no circumstances, defile himself.”

“See, R. BARUCH, I thought it my duty to inform you of this, in order that you need not hope any longer that your son will ever change his mind and that you may know that it is wholly unnecessary for you to visit him.”

R. BARUCH, who had patiently listened to the impudent remarks of BEN-JUDAS, finally arose and, with a voice and look, so common to Spaniards, gave evidence of his utter indignation towards, both, BEN-JUDAS and the Chief-Rabbi of D. “And notwithstanding all this,” said he, “I shall go, and see my son. I shall speak to him words of kindness, in spite of you and the Chief-Rabbi; and the

execrations of both. It is unlawful to curse anyone. He, who does so, does it at the peril of his own soul. God will curse those, who curse others! I detest you and the Chief-Rabbi; and were the whole world to rise up to prevent me, yet shall I go to my son. No one is able to stifle the voice of blood!"

"Indeed," remarked R. AKIBA, "I heartily confess that the manner in which my friend, R. BARUCH, desires to conduct this sad affair is better, far better than thusfar has been done. It is customary to convince the erring brother of the evil of his way by the process of lengthy argument. But rarely is this a success. It seems that Christianity, whatever our opinions may be, has much in its favor. It bases its arguments on quotations from the Holy Scriptures, which no honorable scholar is able to contradict. As a rule, proselytes are fully furnished with the necessary information, defend their position well, and the result is anger, low epithets and acrimony. I thoroughly agree with you, noble friend! Go and visit BEN-ONIE. Try, in the way of kindness and love, to prevail over him. And as for you," turning himself to BEN-JUDAS, "you and the Chief-Rabbi have trespassed against the words of the Talmud which, plainly and emphatically, state that it is 'unlawful to curse a Heathen, or Gentile in the presence of a Gehr,⁽¹⁾ till the tenth generation.' Your conduct, indeed, is unworthy of a man, of a good Israelite. I advise you, either, to alter materially, not only the tone

(1) גֵּר—Stranger, foreigner, proselyte.

but the very essence of your conversation, or never to enter this house again!"

It need hardly be mentioned that BEN-JUDAS felt himself defeated. He knew not how to suppress his wrath. His small eyes rolled in their sockets. He bit his lips. He was in the utmost confusion. He hemmed a little, then arose, saluted none and—departed.

When he was gone, NAOMI remarked: "Certainly, words cannot sufficiently express BEN-ONIE'S conduct. But O, that man—he does not even respect a mother's heart! He seems not to know, that a mother cannot bear such execrations in regard to her child, even if he were the greatest of all sinners! No, my dearest husband, you are right. Go to BEN-ONIE and beg of him, not to kill his parents. Perhaps the good Lord will influence his heart, that he may see the error of his way. Go to my son and may Jehovah go with you."

"Amen!" responded both Rabbis; and, after a few moments silence, R. BARUCH said: "So be it! Friday, in Yirtse Hasshem,⁽¹⁾ I shall go to BEN-ONIE and plead with him and, turning himself to the East, he added: "And Thou God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB, command thy holy angels that they accompany me. Let the Prophet ELIJAH, the angel of the covenant, stand on my right hand, when I plead thy cause. And grant that, when I shall return in peace, I may exclaim with our father JACOB: 'Now let me die, since I have seen thy face!'"

"Amen and amen!" was the emphatic response of NAOMI and Rabbi AKIBA.

(1) 'ו' יום—"If God will," a Talmudic expression. See also St. Ja · es IV: 15

SEVERE TEMPTATIONS.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Lead us not into Temptation !”

“O God, defend me, how I am beset !”

In one of the back-streets of Holland's capital, in close proximity to the “Free Scottish-Mission-Church”—ill-renowned on account of the murderous attack on the Rev. Dr. Schwartz by a youth, scarcely fifteen years old and brother of the two chief-rabbis of Amsterdam, the Reverend Mr. H., a pharisee of pharisees⁽¹⁾—we notice among many warehouses which disfigure the street, a dwelling into which, kind reader, I now invite you to enter. As we are only interested in the person who occupied the back-room, we shall try to give a brief description only of that portion of the house. A narrow flight of stairs is the only way to reach it. As the ascent is rather difficult on account of the narrowness, irregularity and antiquity of the stairs, and a deficiency of light which is provided by only

(1) The word pharisee here, as in most other places in this book, is used in its etymological, not historical sense of the word.

one pane of glass, and this overlooking an alley, anyone who ascends them for the first time and does not meet with a mishap, we are inclined to congratulate. Knowing this, we shall take our time and partly rely on the accommodation of the occupant of the room, who always opens the door whenever a sound on the steps informs him, that some human being is working his way up-stairs. Having turned once to the left, then to the right and again to the left, we find ourselves at the entrance of a room into which a young man politely invites us to enter. It is a small one, with low ceiling and no comforts. An attentive look at the walls may justify the idea they once were papered. They were, in part, ornamented with two maps—the one representing Europe, the other Palestine. To the right of the room stands a plain bedstead with a mattress, one pillow and one blanket. Between the two windows hangs an old looking-glass and, beneath it, a picture representing the Saviour, carrying a lamb on his shoulder, in relief, around which we observe the words: “Le Bon Pasteur.” In the centre of the room stands a plain wooden table, covered with books, among which is prominent a large folio Bible. And if, finally, we mention the three chairs which stand around the table, then we have given you a full description of the room where we meet BEN-ONIE again.

A notable change had taken place since we met him last. As a Jewish Minister he could provide for his necessities and, were there, at any time, a deficiency in means, he could depend on R. BARUCH who was always willing

to supply them. Having, however, resigned his position, by which he practically announced the fact that he intended to embrace Christianity, he could, of course, depend no more on his parents to assist him. As he possessed no resources of income, whence was he to obtain the required means to live, however scantily? No one knew him and, therefore, no one assisted him. The few pennies he had saved had soon dwindled away. It is easy to perceive that, at that period, his condition was anything but enviable. At no time, since his arrival at Amsterdam, had he allowed himself to take dinner more than thrice a week, for which he paid thirty-five cents—twelve cents per dinner! Later he confined himself to twice, and still later his purse did not permit him to do this more than once. Bread, butter and water were the principal means by which he, for more than seven months, sustained life! Sometimes he had even to dispense with butter! It is true, BEN-ONIE had made the acquaintance of a learned and faithful Minister of the Gospel, who was truly a godly and goodly man and who would gladly have assisted him; but BEN-ONIE'S education and character did not permit him to make his position known. He possessed too much lofty self-respect to introduce himself as a pauper. An advertisement in the daily papers procured a few divinity students, whom he instructed in the Hebrew language, and the fees which this yielded, amounting to about five florins ⁽¹⁾ weekly, kept him from actual starvation.

(1) A Florin is equal to forty American cents.

In this condition we meet BEN-ONIE after three years, when we left him at the grave of REBECCA. I need not mention that the poverty to which he was reduced, the privations which he had to undergo, the sufferings he had to endure and the forsaken condition wherein he was left, had somewhat undermined his health. Add to this the sad correspondence with his parents, brothers and sisters, not to mention others; their complaints, their expressions of grief and sorrow, and we can form but a faint idea of BEN-ONIE'S sufferings, temptations, and pitiable condition in those days of darkness and isolation. On that account, he looks pale and careworn. His eyes, not altogether without natural and youthful fire, lie deep in the sockets. They clearly show the result of the many tears they daily shed. But do not imagine that this is the consequence of privations and family-troubles only. O no; BEN-ONIE has to struggle with other temptations, one of which was want of entire faith in his conviction, which is exhibited, however, only by those who monopolize to themselves the true interpretation of experimental Christianity and consider themselves the exclusive authority in pronouncing judgment on conversions. Of course, all who do not bear the seal of those modern pharisees, may as well give up hope of salvation, since, in reality, their Christianity is simply an illusion!

Had BEN-ONIE been able, at that time, to estimate the intrinsic value of the religion of that class of Christians, he would have spared himself

“ Many a sorrow, many a labor,
Many a tear.”

But this school of temptation had its own lesson to teach, if it were only this, that the religion of the Redeemer is not a system of dress, of outward look, of walking along the streets with downcast eyes, of singing psalms and attending, at all times, all sorts of conventicles, even at the cost of social business, or domestic duties! It always struck me that those who teach, or practice these things, do not, as a rule, just exactly belong to the "humble and pure of heart" who, ultimately, alone shall see God.

In those days there was at Amsterdam an excellent Athenæum with a theological faculty, the professors of which had procured for themselves quite a name and fame among the scholars of Europe. There was Dr. LOHMAN, a renowned church-historian; also Dr. NEWENHUIS, an eminent exegete; Dr. DE HOPE SCHEFFER, of whom it was proverbially said that: "One must not ask what the professor knows, but what he does not know;" and other equally celebrated men. It was in this institution that BEN-ONIE studied the classics and theology, and here he received much attention and useful knowledge. Here he spent most of the day. When he left the lecture-room, it was to go to his lodgings to eat his dinner, consisting, for the greater part, of dry bread, not seldom soaked with tears. No wonder; such poverty he had never known. At home was abundance and to spare. Here he was almost perishing for the want of the necessities of life. Too poor to procure oil for his

lamp and coal for his stove, he took his books, went to a shoemaker-shop and, by the dim light of his candle, managed to study Latin and Greek. And yet he felt relatively happy. For he had found Him, for whom he had been looking and longing so many years. He had found the Redeemer, his Redeemer, who had granted him peace. He had received the privilege of kneeling at the foot of the cross, to hold sweet communion with his Messiah, Israel's Messiah. In such exalted moments he forgot all his sufferings. Never did he understand better the deep meaning of that solemn word of the Saviour that "only one thing is needful,"⁽¹⁾ than in those sublime moments when he was resting at his Father's bosom, when he was drinking streams of living water, flowing from the Fountain of Salvation. When he arose from his knees, he felt strengthened and refreshed—able to take up his cross and bear it after his Saviour.

Eight months had thus passed, when the time that BEN-ONIE should receive the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, began to approach rapidly. Of this he duly notified his parents in a most affectionate letter, giving the reason which compelled him to be obedient to God, assuring them that, henceforth, he would be the same dutiful son and loving child as ever, and begging of them to consider the whole affair as ordained in the Heavens, and therefore to be resisted by no human power.

The impression, which this letter made in R. BARUCH's home, we have observed already

(1) St. Luke 10: 42.

in the preceding chapter. Was it crushing to BEN-ONIE's parents, it was an object of the greatest indignation to his brothers and sisters. From that moment "letters from home" were showered upon him. The last he received was an announcement that R. BARUCH intended to visit him within a few days. This message was not a pleasant one. However happy he was to see his father at any time, at that moment he wished heartily that some obstacle might present itself, whereby R. BARUCH would be prevented from accomplishing his purpose. In the mean while the Sacrament would have been administered and—thought BEN-ONIE—it would be easier to inform his father that everything in regard to baptism, was finished.⁽¹⁾

The approaching baptism of BEN-ONIE remained no longer a secret. It became known throughout the city. In consequence of this, he had to endure the grossest insults in those public streets, chiefly inhabited by Jews belonging to the sect of the Pharisees. BEN-ONIE bore this with Christian fortitude.

Once, when he was returning from the Athenæum, a gentleman approached him. He appeared to be an Israelite. Without saying a single word he handed BEN-ONIE a letter, and left immediately. Having opened it, he read:

"SIR—If you are not careful in your movements and promenades, avoiding above all the H. and the Jewish B. streets during the evening, you will, within the next three days, be the victim of a conspiracy. As a Jew, I have nothing

(1) We shall see later, how the good Lord granted BEN-ONIE the desire of his heart.

but contempt for you ; but humanity, being stronger than fidelity, prevails. Any efforts to find out my name would be in vain. Beware !

A MEMBER OF THE CONSPIRACY.

P. S.—If your apostacy has not extinguished in you every feeling of gratitude, then you will look upon this letter as confidential.”

At first this mysterious letter filled BEN-ONIE’S heart with fear and indignation, and he was earnestly thinking of informing the Police of it. But after re-reading it, especially the postscript, he decided to respect the warning of the unknown author and act according to his advice.

One week later he received a letter from the Rev. Charles S., D. D., informing him that the 3d day of February, 1863, was set apart as the day on which he wished “to administer to him the Sacrament of Baptism,” kindly and lovingly requesting him “to prepare himself thereto by fasting and prayer.”

This announcement pleased him exceedingly. It quieted his agitated heart. It soothed his anxious mind. It calmed his excited nerves. It seemed to him now as if his abode looked more cheerful, his morsel of bread more inviting.

“Who is truly rich? He who is satisfied with what he possesses.” thus we read somewhere in the Talmud.⁽¹⁾ To be content with what the Almighty has been pleased to grant

(1) Pirke Aboth.

us, however little that may be, is one of the greatest blessings which can possibly be enjoyed. It prolongs man's life. It preserves his health. It ennobles his character. It renders him useful to, and sympathetic with his fellow man. It is God's gift—the result of childlike confidence in Him, who feeds the sparrow and clothes the lily.

SEVERE TEMPTATIONS.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER IX.

It was the last Sunday in January 1863, when, immediately before the sermon, the Rev. Dr. S. solemnly announced to the eight hundred worshippers, who usually attend that church, that "on Sunday next, he purposed, through God's assistance, to administer to BEN-ONIE the Sacrament of Holy Baptism," inviting those who "would know just cause why he should not proceed, to come forward," and admonishing all to "lift up hand and heart unto the God of love, in behalf of him who knocks at the door of God's church, anxious to be admitted."

The following day BEN-ONIE received a letter, containing an invitation, extended to him by a gentleman, who was held in great esteem by that class of Christians, who always doubt the sincerity of others, but are sure of their own; who are always ready to "show forth God's praise" principally with "their

lips," but rarely in "their lives." Besides, he was a member of many Christian institutions and Chairman of the "Friends of Israel."⁽¹⁾ Moreover, he was a teacher in the Sunday school, and a deacon in the Scotch Mission Church. All proofs of his piety!

BEN-ONIE thought so.

Joyfully and hopefully he went, at the appointed hour, to the deacon's residence.

"I am happy, sir, to have the pleasure of a conversation with you,"—thus he addressed BEN-ONIE—"very happy indeed. I should have invited you long since, but business of importance and the demands of society have thus far prevented me. What I am anxious to know, sir, is how you came to be a Christian?"

This question was rather disappointing to BEN-ONIE. He had not expected it. He knew not that this is the pet theme of that class of Christians, who are, as a rule, trying to find out the way along which the mind of the convert travels; the direction in which his heart moves; the amount of doctrine he believes; his explanation of Trinity and Divinity; whether, or not, he believes in inspiration, election, predestination; whether he be sound in the perseverance of the Saints and the personality of the Devil! If on all these points the convert is sound, not in the least differing from their own opinions, he is considered all right. But as this is not always the case—people will differ—it is a matter-of-course that

(1) A society for the propagation of Christianity among the Jews in Holland.

few converts can find favor in their eyes. BEN-ONIE was not aware of this and, therefore, he had not prepared himself for such a spiritual examination. He very politely replied:

"Most gladly will I tell you some events of my life which, however, are neither interesting, nor enviable; but what passed between God and my soul, pardon me, sir, I do not feel at liberty to reveal."

"Why not, I pray?" asked Mr. PSEU-
DELPHOS.

"I must confess," replied BEN-ONIE, "that at this moment, I am not able to give a satisfactory answer to your question. My own heart tells me not to do it; that it is unseemly."

"Well," resumed Mr. PSEUDELPHOS, "if you have not the courage to 'give account of the hope which is in you,' then I shall not insist upon it. But this I must say, if you wish to be recognized by the people of God as a brother, you will have to show that you are entitled to it."

"For Heaven's sake do not misunderstand me, sir," begged BEN-ONIE. "Gladly will I give an account of the hope in me, and explain the ground on which my conviction rests. I am quite willing, at any time, to give a reason why I am a Christian; why I sacrificed all that was, oh, so dear to me; why I gave up every comfort of life in order to follow my Saviour, why I am suffering intense agonies mentally and untold privations physically; but as you, together with a few other gentlemen, were present when, a few weeks ago, I stated my views to the Rev. Dr.

S. I do not think that you would feel inclined to waste your precious time in listening to them again. As for the secret relations, which exist between my God and my soul, I could not very well explain them in human language. I judge that which passes in the most hidden recesses of a man's soul, ought not to be brought before the judgment-seat of public opinion. I assure you, however, that, if my heavenly Father will grant me life and health, I shall show by my works that I am Christ's follower and compel those who do the same, to recognize me as such."

"I perfectly perceive you, sir," resumed Mr. PSEUDELPHOS. "You will work for your salvation, and seem not to know that only by faith we can obtain it."

"But how would you show that you are a Christian, and what would you do to inherit God's Kingdom?" was BEN-ONIE'S simple question.

"From this question I must come to the conclusion that you have very little knowledge of your own heart. You do not seem to know at all that a man, in his unconverted state, is 'dead in sin and misery' and that the 'wrath of God' is upon him. Indeed the whole world lies in condemnation before God. It is simply an object of God's anger. That, my dear sir, is the A, B, C of theology."

"I do confess, sir," remarked BEN-ONIE, "that I must read my Bible very imperfectly; for, quite recently, I read in St. JOHN'S Gospel that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that—'"⁽¹⁾

(1) St. John III: 16.

"Stop a moment," interrupted Mr. PSEUDELPHOS quickly, "let me first ask you: Do you ever make use of commentaries?"

"From my childhood up to this day have I studied the commentaries of the ablest and most celebrated Rabbis—"

"Don't speak to me about Jewish commentaries," interrupted Mr. PSEUDELPHOS again somewhat rudely, "they are worthless, though I must confess, I never saw any of them! Besides, they only treat of the Old Testament in which, we Christians, take but little interest! I allude to Christian commentaries! I will gladly lend you a few, provided you promise to return them in the same condition you receive them. I shall give you those of CALVIN and BRAKEL's Reasonable Religion;⁽¹⁾ the rest are of but little account. You will observe, however, that, unless you pay close attention, they are difficult to understand."

"Be not uneasy on that account," assured BEN-ONIE, "I shall diligently read the Bible, which will render your commentaries intelligible!"

Scarcely had BEN-ONIE uttered the last words, when a domestic announced the hour of dinner.

Mr. PSEUDELPHOS arose, apologized that he could not prolong the conversation which, he thought, was wholly for the benefit of BEN-ONIE, handed him the commentaries which he had to "return in the same condition he re-

(1) An extensive and popular treatise on Christianity, highly appreciated among the ultra-orthodox.

ceived them" and, saying "the Lord be with you," accompanied him to the door.

Both went to dinner; the one to feed on the "fatted calf," the other on "CALVIN'S commentaries," spiced with "BRAKEL'S Reasonable Religion."

On the first day of February—just two days before BEN-ONIE'S baptism—the postman handed him a letter, containing the following letter from his father:

"DEAR BEN-ONIE:—If the good Lord will permit it, I expect to be with you to-morrow-evening at the expiration of the Holy Sabbath. I shall be happy, if I can meet you alone in your room. Wishing you the blessing from above, I am, as ever, your faithful, but sorrowing father,

R. BARUCH."

This letter caused a painful sensation in BEN-ONIE'S trembling soul. It was one of the severest temptations to which, thus far, he had been exposed. This letter was, in the fullest sense of the word, an unwelcome one. He could not, possibly, meet his father on the eve of his baptism. It was not the proper time to argue. And, yet, what could he do? He felt agitated more than ever. As was his custom in difficult cases, he went to the Rev. Dr. S. But even this gentleman knew not how to advise him otherwise than to be at his room, to receive his father. He would have gladly assisted, or been with him, but this was against the desire of R. BARUCH. Dr. S. sympathized deeply with the young man, whose outward appearance plainly indicated that intense suffering was slowly undermining his health. How gladly would the man of God have

relieved him! There are, however, circumstances in which all human help is vain; when we must look for succor only at the foot of the cross; when we must rely for assistance only on Him who is able to grant it.

“Far better ’t is to trust in God
And have the Lord our friend,
Than on the greatest human power
For safety to depend.”

BEN-ONIE returned to his room and retired. But to sleep was wholly out of the question. The following day was for him a day of the severest temptation. He was “in the wilderness to be tempted.” The weather was in perfect harmony with BEN-ONIE’s inmost feelings. A drizzling rain fell all day. The sun withheld his quickening rays. Not a single beam revived his drooping spirit. Like the Prophet ELIJAH, sitting under the Juniper-tree, so BEN-ONIE felt his courage ebbing. Like JOHN the Baptist, in prison, he felt his faith wavering. Was it a wonder that, under such circumstances, the Tempter used all means to persuade his victim to “fall down at his feet and worship him?”

Night was come. The hour, appointed by R. BARUCH, was rapidly approaching. In reading the Psalms and, from time to time, speaking in prayer to his Redeemer, BEN-ONIE tried to strengthen himself for the last, but severest trial. Hours passed away, but no one called. Just when the carillon of the “Wester-Church” chimed the eleventh hour, a carriage drove up to the house and soon a rap was heard at the front-door. This frightened BEN-ONIE. Like a madman he rushed to the

door and, crying: "My father, O my father, God help me!" he sank to the floor.

Meanwhile the landlord had opened the door. The cabman had asked information about some person for whom he had a trunk and departed.—R. BARUCH, having missed the train, did not arrive that day.

When BEN-ONIE had recovered from his fainting condition, he knelt down and offered on the altar of gratitude the sacrifices of thanks and praise to the God of his Fathers, who had so graciously answered his prayers and wonderfully sustained him in the hour of temptation. When he awoke the following morning, he felt that another lesson was taught him by his heavenly Father: that God's angels will administer to those who, in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, resist the Prince of Darkness.

It is written: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."⁽¹⁾

(1) James 4; 7.

BEN-ONIE

RECEIVES THE

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

CHAPTER X.

“My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.”

The following morning BEN-ONIE felt refreshed and strengthened. He arose early and as usual partook of a light breakfast. As it was the day appointed for his baptism, he spent considerable time in prayer. When the chimes of the numerous churches in Amsterdam reminded the faithful that the hour of worship had arrived, he repaired to church, although the Sacrament of Baptism would not be administered to him till evening. BEN-ONIE felt unusually happy and peaceful; and, in order that he might not be disturbed by visits of any kind, Dr. S., who was BEN-ONIE'S pastor, thought best that he should remain all day in the vestry-room, which was put in order for that purpose. It was agreed that BEN-ONIE'S two God-fathers should remain with

him. One of them, Dr. O. VAN B., was professor-extraordinary of History at the Atheneum and the other, Mr. C., a licentiate of the University of Utrecht. Both were God-fearing men. Their company was to him of great comfort and support, of consolation and sympathy.

When the clock struck six, the hour of his baptism had arrived. BEN-ONIE, accompanied by his God-fathers, entered the church, a large and solemn structure. In front of the pulpit, on which the Artificer had spent much time and talent, stood a table which was covered with a plain white linen cloth. On it stood a handsome font of solid silver. On one side was represented St. JOHN, baptizing the Lord Jesus, on the other side stood in golden letters: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."⁽¹⁾ It was presented to that church by the Baron VAN B. VAN D. when he returned from the grave wherein he had laid his wife, commonly called the "Dorcas of the Nineteenth Century." During the service it was covered with a large damask table-cloth, on which the late Baroness had worked some of the most solemn events in the life of Christ. Before the table stood three chairs, wherein BEN-ONIE and his witnesses took their seats. The church was filled to its utmost capacity. It was estimated that about two thousand people were present. A great many had come because a Jewish rabbi was to be baptized, and this was not an-every-day occurrence. As soon as BEN-ONIE was seated, the Clergyman,

St. Mark XVI: 16.

the Rev. Dr. S., who was once stabbed by a Jewish boy,⁽¹⁾ entered the pulpit. The service began with singing the first three stanzas of the the 42d Psalm. The lessons were taken from Exod. XX. and Rom. VIII. Then followed the sermon, the subject of which was taken from St. MATTH. 9: 9,^c "Follow me." The worthy Clergyman had promised BEN-ONIE to avoid as much as possible everything which would be calculated to excite his feelings. Hence he was very calm during the sermon, and could follow the able discourse with benefit to himself. The venerable Minister preached with power and energy. He eloquently portrayed the image of Him whom the Christian must follow; then dwelt on the requirements in one who desires to follow Jesus and, finally, reminded the listening masses of the "crown of righteousness" as the result of thus faithfully following Him, who alone had an absolute right to say "follow me." The discourse was rather brief, but able and touching; making a deep impression on the large congregation, among whom were several Israelites who, instead of evincing indignation as was expected, evinced a spirit of interest and surprise.

The sermon being finished, the congregation were requested to sing Psalm 51: 1, 2, 6, 8. Dr. S. then left the pulpit and placed himself before the table, in front of BEN-ONIE. The hymn being sung, he read the baptismal service. BEN-ONIE made an effort to rise together with the congregation, but the Minister, noticing his agitation, bade him remain

(1) See Page 107.

seated. The usual questions were then directed to him, to everyone of which he replied an emphatic "Yes." Subsequently he knelt down and, Dr. S., baptizing him with water, said with a loud voice:

"BEN-
ONIE, I BAP-
TIZE THEE IN
THE NAME OF THE
FATHER AND OF THE
SON AND OF THE HOLY
GHOST, AMEN!" AND PLAC-
ING HIS HANDS ON THE NEW
CHRISTIAN'S HEAD, EXCLAIMED: "THE
LORD BLESS THEE AND KEEP THEE;
THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE
UPON THEE AND BE GRACIOUS
UNTO THEE; THE LORD LIFT
UP HIS COUNTENANCE
UPON THEE AND GIVE
THEE PEACE."
"AMEN." (1)

The Clergyman announced the 4th and 5th stanzas of the 121 Psalm:

The stately organ pealed forth its soul-inspiring tones. They invited the faithful to holy thoughts, earnest meditation and pious adoration. From many an eye dropped "the sympathizing tear." Everyone seemed deeply moved. It was a sublime scene, this mass of humanity animated with one and the same holy impulse, lifting up hands and hearts to the Father of love for the brother who was prostrated at the foot of the Cross, waiting for the baptism of God's holy Spirit!

• As for BEN-ONIE himself, at the moment the

(1) Numbers 6, 24.

worthy Clergyman pronounced the Old-Testament blessing, he had fainted. He had long struggled against the constantly increasing nervous excitement. But he finally was compelled to yield. When he, standing before God and his servant, had promised most earnestly, most emphatically to "obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, walking in the same all the days of his life;" when he was solemnly dedicated to the service of God Almighty, consecrated and sealed by the Waters of Regeneration, symbolizing the blood of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," washing and purifying his soul—he could no longer control his emotion, already aroused to the highest pitch! The weak and exhausted frame could no longer endure the tremendous struggle between body and soul, the flesh and the spirit. He lay prostrate on the ground, but—Oh, how glorious!—at the feet of his Master! He had surrendered all human power, all bodily strength, in order to rest for some time undisturbed on the bosom of his Messiah, whom he so long had been seeking and who, at last so wonderfully, so graciously had revealed Himself unto his unworthy servant.

Not till Dr. S. had finished his prayer of thanks and praise did BEN-ONIE revive.

Having ascended the pulpit once more, the Minister requested the congregation to receive the newly baptized brother in the spirit of love and affection; to continue in prayer to God for the "peace of Jerusalem" and the spiritual welfare of his ancient people.

This solemn and, for BEN-ONIE, memorable

service ended with singing the eleventh stanza of the 72d Psalm.

Having returned to the vestry-room, an aged gentleman, one of the wardens of the church, presented BEN-ONIE with a beautiful and valuable Bible which he most gratefully accepted.

Meanwhile a large number of sympathetic friends had gathered to congratulate BEN-ONIE. Among them was one, a lady in deep mourning, who anxiously sought an opportunity to be admitted. Everyone respectfully made way for her to pass. She approached and, without saying a word, pressed a warm kiss on BEN-ONIE's brow, and immediately retired.

It was Lady HANNAH, the aged widow of Dr. ISAAC DA COSTA, the great Poet of Holland, the faithful Christian Author, the Hebrew among Hebrews, knighted by his King, honored by his fellow-citizens, beloved of his God!

Together with Dr. S. and his God-fathers, BEN-ONIE rode to the residence of the Minister where, in honor of the newly baptized Christian, a "sweet repast" was prepared. Among the few invited was Mr. M. VAN V., the Mayor of Amsterdam who was a brother-in-law of Dr. S. BEN-ONIE was seated between the Clergyman and his amiable wife. He, however, partook little or nothing of what adorned the table, nor in the conversation which, directly or indirectly, referred to the service in the church. Though present in the body, yet in spirit he was, evidently, in the Temple of the Lord. He loved to remember what had happened there, a little while ago. It was so

sweet, so dear to him ! BEN-ONIE felt himself elevated above the earth. He touched his head and noticed that the waters of baptism had not yet dried up. How happy was he on that account ! It reminded him more forcibly of the Holy Sacrament. He felt as if he had descended with Jesus into Jordan and was baptized by Him, Himself. It appeared to him as if the hands of the Clergyman were yet placed on his head in blessing—it was to him as though they were the hands of the Master, who had baptized him with the Holy Spirit. At that moment he knew that he had lost consciousness. That was a momentary victory of the spirit over the body. In that state he saw, as it were, the stream of the waters of life descending from Heaven, and his thirsty soul drank freely “without money and without price.”⁽¹⁾ They regenerated his heart; they purified his soul; they sanctified his mind; they revived his spirit; they animated him with new life, holy will and fervent zeal. He had bathed in the stream which flowed from Paradise which had invigorated him, and given him new courage to take up his cross and bear it after the Master. Although he had been a disciple of the Lord before—he was SEALED as such only then, when the Waters of Regeneration had been poured over his head. That gladdened his heart; that cheered his soul; that elevated his spirit to that lofty summit, to ascend which he had so long been struggling, praying and suffering. He was now in reality a Christian. He now could prove it !

(1) Isaiah 55: 1.

In this happy condition of mind and heart he went, in company of his God-fathers, to his abode. His room—he thought—had now a different appearance. He was, indeed, happy to be there again. Those bare walls had been the mute witnesses of so many sufferings, of so many tears! We love the place where we suffer. The Heavenly peace, which now filled his heart, had presented everything that surrounded him in a different light. “I am a Christian,” that was the only thought which filled his mind. “The lily is clothed, and the sparrow fed—henceforth the good Shepherd will provide for me, too!”—His eye fell on the little picture, representing Christ and the lamb at His bosom. After having gazed at it for a length of time, he fell down on his knees and whispered:

“Jesus, my Jesus, how doest thou love me! How beats my heart for Thee. How happy am I that I may bear Thy name! How lovingly lookest Thou from Heaven upon me, Thy humble servant! O, Jesus, my Lord, my Saviour, let me never go astray from Thy fold! Hold me by Thy hand, that I may stumble not. Blessed Redeemer, look, ah, look always so kindly, so lovingly upon me, that I may be faithful to Thee. I am a Christian—Thou hast acknowledged me and sealed me! O, my Lord Jesus, I pray Thee, let me henceforth live as a Christian, and die as a Christian!”

Having commended his parents and other relatives to the gracious care of Israel's Keeper, he retired, and soon fell in a deep slumber.

How calmly does he sleep, who casts himself on the bosom of Him who never slumbers, who always watches over those whom he loves! He, indeed, is safe who trusts in Israel's God; he who dwelleth in the "shadow of the Almighty." Therefore, fear not! God, in Christ, is thy shield and buckler. Take, then, courage, O thou whom God has called to suffer—yet a little while and thou shalt be comforted. As true as God lives, so truly is His eye directed on thee. Wipe thy tears. Cease thy complaints. Be joyful and hopeful. It becomes him who walks by the side of the Master to be of good cheer. He raises up the broken-spirited; He heals the wounded; He strengthens the weak; He comforts the repining; He protects the helpless—wherefore, then, shouldest thou tremble "O thou worm JACOB? Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; I have chosen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."⁽¹⁾

"Commend thy ways to the Lord and trust in Him, He will take care of thee!"

(1) Isaiah 41: 10.

RABBI BARUCH

AND

BEN-ONIE FACE TO FACE.

CHAPTER XI.

“My grief
Stretches itself beyond the hour of death;
The blood weeps from my heart.”

Early, the next morning, the postman handed BEN-ONIE a letter. He recognized the handwriting. It was his father's. With trembling hand he broke its seal. He read as follows:

“BEN-ONIE:—I arrived last night. It is my desire to have an interview with you as soon as possible. Answer immediately and inform me when and where you desire to receive me. Your father,
R. BARUCH.”

For a long time BEN-ONIE remained in deep thought. Finally he aroused himself and exclaimed: “So be it. I shall not try to escape my father. I shall receive him—to-day, in this room. God will sustain me!”

Although resolute in his decision, yet the

large drops of perspiration which had gathered on his brow, testified plainly to the severe struggle in his soul. It was a conflict between duty to God and love to parents. He sat down and, respectfully, wrote to his father that he would receive him in his room at any hour, he might be pleased to appoint.

BEN-ONIE remained at home all day. In study and prayer he tried to prepare himself for the ordeal through which he would have to go. And, indeed, he needed the latter very much, as he felt scarcely able to meet his father, not knowing exactly how to inform him of his baptism, fearing that the shock might prove to be more than the aged gentleman could bear.

When he had waited and suffered several hours, a carriage drove up to the door, a rap was heard and, after a few moments, R. BARUCH entered the room.

Scarcely does he notice his father, when BEN-ONIE casts himself in the open arms which R. BARUCH had stretched out to him.

"My father, my beloved father!"

"My child!"

These few words, and the heart-breaking sobs of both, was all that was heard for several minutes.

BEN-ONIE offered an easy chair to his father which he had borrowed for the purpose and took a seat opposite him. Not till now had he observed a gentleman, who had remained standing at the door, quietly and unobtrusively, so as not to disturb the affecting scene between father and son. BEN-ONIE recognized him. It was the amiable R. AKIBA, the friend

of his youth, whose acquaintance the reader made in one of the preceding chapters. He went to him, shook his hand warmly and requested him to take a seat close by his side.

When R. BARUCH had recovered himself, he said: "My son, I suppose you know the reason of my visit. For a long time have I been anxious to come to you, but I was compelled to wait until the good Lord had granted me sufficient strength to travel in this season. Now, in order to be brief, tell me, my child, what is your decision?"

It was evident from the question, that R. BARUCH had, as yet, no knowledge that his son was already baptized.

BEN-ONIE found himself in the greatest perplexity as to the reply he should make. To inform his father that he had already received the Sacrament, seemed to him too cruel. He desired to spare the feelings of his aged father as much as he possibly could. No wonder, therefore, that he somewhat hesitated to respond. R. BARUCH, seeing his son's perplexity, resumed:

"Child, listen! I see that you have not quite resolved what to do, otherwise you would certainly have answered your father. Therefore, as it is my intention to return home tomorrow, I shall make the following proposal: If you desire to accompany me, then I assure you of a most hearty welcome from your loving mother, whose arms are open to receive you. At home you will have only to ask what you wish, and we shall try to make your life as agreeable as possible. We shall gladly make any sacrifice to make you happy. But

you can, if you so desire, remain here and accomplish your plan. I could not, nor would I use any other force than a moral one. But you must know that, at the moment you forsake the religion of your Fathers, you have ceased to be our child. You are forever banished from the home!"

Saying this, R. BARUCH arose, lifted up his hand unto Heaven and exclaimed: And as true as Thou livest, O God of my life!—"

"For God's sake, my father," sobbed BEN-ONIE, "do not seal this with an oath. No one knows what he will do to-morrow. Act as you please with me, but I beseech you, my father, do not bind yourself with an oath!"

"Well, be it so," said the Rabbi after a few moments silence, "but your words indicate that you wish to continue in your deplorable course. Listen, BEN-ONIE, it is my duty to use every effort to avert this calamity. If in appealing to your heart I shall be unsuccessful; if my tears and those of my poor wife, your mother, your own mother, can be of no avail, then my last hope will be, that this young man, who was once your friend, by power of argument, will be able to show, how miserably you have erred from the fold of Jeshurun and, if you persist in going astray, will be irreparably lost. Permit me to finish," said he, seeing BEN-ONIE desired to make a remark. "I know very well that pious Christians will be saved. I know the Talmudic maxim as well as you.⁽¹⁾ But you must not flatter yourself that this will benefit you. It

(2) See Page 57, Note 1.

does not refer to those who betray the religion of their Fathers. On the contrary, the Talmud condemns them.⁽¹⁾ I know also that you will be prepared to defend your position. And, therefore, R. AKIBA will be supported by an other and very learned rabbi, who resides in this city, who is more experienced than he, who has rescued many a perishing one, and whom I expect here momentarily. If you, however, my son, think that the weight of argument will be where the number of its advocates is the largest, well then, I give you authority to invite a Christian theologian to sustain you, provided he be not an Israelite. I know, yes, I am sure, the Rabbi would not condescend to argue with such a one! You see, my son, I wish to act fairly, using only lawful means to convince you of your error. If this, however, be unsuccessful, then, oh then nothing, will be left to me but to appeal to your heart for the sake of my poor wife, your aged and broken-hearted mother. BEN-ONIE," continued R. BARUCH, with a voice so touching and tender that BEN-ONIE felt, as it were, the ground sinking beneath him, "BEN-ONIE, my first-born son, my pride, my crown, —you see these hairs?"—convulsively grasping his rich locks - "they have become gray by the reason of the many cares which I have, willingly and even cheerfully, borne that you should become, what you are this day: a 'Cohen Elyohn,' a priest of the Most High! And, as a reward for this, you will thrust a dagger in your mother's heart, and dig a

(1) See Page 150.

premature grave for your father! Can it be possible that I have nursed an adder in my breast!.....Listen, my son, if the Christian religion requires of you such ingratitude, then this would be a sufficient proof that the Israelites are not mistaken, when they accuse the Christians of paying but little respect to the Fifth Commandment! The worth of a religion must be evident from the practice of its professors. The Founder of the Christian religion Himself, whom, by the way, most of the Christians do not understand, has said: 'By the fruit ye shall know them.'⁽¹⁾ And if we cast an unprejudiced look at the Christians, I cannot but come to the conclusion that, either, the Christian religion is not calculated for this earth, or the Christians are not the proper subjects of the same. Look how Christianity is split up into innumerable divisions, each of them claiming the exclusive truth."

"Permit me, dear father," observed BEN-ONIE, "most respectfully to call your attention to the fact that these several divisions differ only in non-essentials, or in church-government; not in fundamental doctrines. Besides, the greatest and best thinkers of our time believe that the denominations are approaching their amalgamation."

"I admit your first statement," replied R. BARUCH, "but deny the second. But even the divided state of Christianity, I do not advance as a sufficient reason against its absolute truthfulness; while some, as you remarked,

(1) Matth. 7: 16.

hope and look forward to the amalgamation of the Christian sects, there are others, just as great, and just as thoughtful, who do not hope and, by no means, look forward for such amalgamation, on the ground that it would not conduce to the health and development of the Christian religion. They consider it as much impossible, as all men should look, speak and act, alike! However, let this be as it is. I simply desire to call your attention more emphatically to the IRRELIGIOUS condition of by far the majority of the Christians. That is simply appalling! They have little or no respect for their Sundays and Feast-days, nor do their children honor their parents as is customary among the Jews. Neither do they show any veneration to the aged.⁽¹⁾ Their churches are frequented by only a few, the greater part enjoying themselves elsewhere. With but few exceptions you will rarely find a family-altar among them. Very few say even grace at meals. They never do it in public places. Hence the majority of Christians live as though they do not believe in the existence of a God! Indeed, practically they have no God!—Now visit their homes as I do daily, and you will observe the influence of this want of religion in their social life. Most of all on the marriage-relation. The number of divorces, in consequence of having reduced marriage to a simple social contract is not only ridiculous, but blasphemous, impious, immoral!

“Shall I now call your attention also to the

(1) Livit. 19: 32.

drinking-places which are filled with their sons!—To the houses of prostitution which are filled with their daughters!—To their penitentiaries, scaffolds etc.?

“Need I point out to you how, at the present time, many of their preachers and teachers actually deny the existence of a living and self-conscious God in the pulpit as well as in the cathedra?

“I have often wondered how those atheists and semi-atheists can meet a Jew without a blush of shame!

Behold, my son, the religious and moral condition of those whom you seem so anxious to join!”

“My father” began BEN-ONIE, quite astonished that R. BARUCH was so well informed of the present deplorable condition of Christianity, “I must honestly confess, so far as the practical life of the Christians is concerned, I am too ignorant, either, to admit, or to contradict your very unfavorable and—oh, I hope for the world’s sake,—exaggerated opinion of the social and religious life of the Christians. Only this I would respectfully remark that, according to my humble opinion, you reason from premises which are not wholly correct. You have—pardon me, beloved father—committed the same mistake of which many are guilty ‘Judging and condemning a religion from the practice of its followers.’ This would be the same as judging food by the taste of the consumers! Let us, for the sake of argument, suppose your estimate of the Christians be correct. What, after all, does this prove against the Christian religion? When the

Christians cast in our teeth that Jews are deceivers and swindlers—what does such an accusation prove against the Jewish religion? Nothing whatsoever. The Jewish religion condemns any act of injustice, no matter by whom, or against whom done. It is but fair to judge the Christian religion by the same rule. She teaches love, absolute love. If a Christian acts contrary to it, he forfeits the name of Christian just as much as a Jew is no more a Jew, if he violates the Law of MOSES.”

Scarcely had he finished, when a rap was heard at the door and the Rabbi, who was invited by R. BARUCH to partake in the argument, entered.

When the usual salutations had been exchanged, the newly arrived rabbi, whom we shall call R. JOSEPH, whose appearance I prefer not to describe and whose character will be evident, began his argument with the following introduction:

“Sir, according to the information which I received from your sorrowing father, you must be about to join Israel’s enemies and embrace their false religion; tell me if this be true?”

“Reverend sir,” replied BEN-ONIE, “although the tone of your speech is far from being courteous, yet for my father’s sake, I shall give you a straightforward answer. Yes, I shall join the Christians, whom you are pleased to call Israel’s enemies, and embrace the religion, which you are so kind as to call false; statements which I emphatically deny.”

“What?” remarked R. JOSEPH, angrily, “you dare contradict me, who, not only

theoretically, but also practically, can prove both?"

"Until you have done so, I shall continue to contradict you," answered BEN-ONIE calmly.

"But I need not, by any lengthy arguments, prove that the Christians are the natural enemies of the Israelites," rejoined R. JOSEPH. "It is a fact. Everyone believes it, for history proves it. From the moment our Fathers were banished from their country, the Christians have oppressed them. And for what reason? They are not able to answer; unless it be the privilege of him who is the strongest! But that was a law among their heathen ancestors, when they were yet in their savage state. Remember only the days of the crusades, and those of the Spanish Inquisition! How they have slaughtered our sons and ravaged our daughters! How their prisons were filled with them and their scaffolds deluged with their blood! They have expelled our Fathers from every civilized country; confiscated their property and robbed them of their possessions. Ah, 'a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted.'⁽¹⁾ They have reduced them to a state of helplessness, in order to more easily crush them. In those days, and even later, a Jew was, in their estimation, less than a dog. And how do they look upon us to-day? It is true, they do not actually murder, nor rob us any longer—because science, and knowledge, and civiliza-

(1) Jeremiah 31: 15.

tion have taught them a different lesson; nor do they expel us any longer, because this would ruin their own social condition, so far as business and general traffic are concerned. It would deprive them of those resources, which the God of our Father's has granted us even in the land of our peregrination. It is not—I assure you—because they sympathize with us, or because they wish to heal the fearful wounds which their fathers inflicted on us—no, oh no, the same heathen enmity which was once manifested by their progenitors against Israel and all that is specifically Israelitish, is apparent in them yet. They are their worthy children. And, take notice of this, not only do they show their animosity to those Jews who are faithful to the God of their ancestors, but also to those unfortunate Israelites who have the deplorable courage to bow their knee to him, who is man, like ourselves,—who is not Israel's Messiah. Yes, even the baptized Israelite can find no favor in their eyes. They never forgive him for what he once was!—Do you yet desire to contradict me?"

"Sir," replied BEN-ONIE, "my venerable father spoke to me, before you entered this room, somewhat in the same strain. I answered that a religion must not be judged by its followers. It must stand or fall on its own merits. The all-important question here is not of joining the Christians, but the Christian church, no matter whether the Christians are proper, or improper members of the same; whether they are our enemies, or friends. It is their religion which I seek

and which you have declared to be false. To prove this remains yet your duty."

R. JOSEPH: "I have plainly told you that a Jew cannot worship Jesus of Nazareth, since he does not believe him to be the Christ. And as he is the centre of the Christian religion, it follows, logically, that the Christian religion is false."

BEN-ONIE: "It is true, you plainly asserted this, but did not prove it."

R. JOSEPH: "The learned R. JITZCHAC, in his polemic against the Nazarenes, has done this in the most perfect manner."

BEN-ONIE: "And yet a number of German and French rabbis have, in the same perfect manner, proved that R. JITZCHAC's statements were incorrect."

R. JOSEPH: "I am not aware of this."

BEN-ONIE: "That is no fault of mine."

For a few moments silence prevailed.

Subsequently R. AKIBA said: "With your permission, gentlemen, I only desire to say that BEN-ONIE is quite right; the refutation exists, but is not well known. Besides, I admit very readily that, to judge the intrinsic value of a religion, it must be studied apart from its confessors. The Christian religion must be examined by the light of the Holy Scriptures. It is to them the Christians refer us. Now it would be easy for me to attack Christianity with the weapons her own children so liberally offer. I only mention such names as Dr. STRAUSS in GERMANY; Dr. RENAN in France, Bishop COLENSO in England and Dr. SCHOLTEN in Holland. But I detest these weapons, because they are double-edged.

They are directed against, both, Judaism and Christianity! I will simply call attention to the fact that the Christians take those prophecies which are but partly fulfilled out of their connection, and bring them in relation to Christ. Here is an example: They believe that He is the Prince of Peace, of whom Isaiah⁽¹⁾ speaks, but pay no attention to the Kingdom of peace, of which the same prophet⁽²⁾ tells us, which must be the consequence of his advent. And that that Kingdom is yet afar off, no one will deny. On the contrary, the Founder of Christianity declares Himself that he is not come to bring peace, but the sword;⁽³⁾ and to make the children rebellious against their parents. I shall be very happy to hear my friend's explanation of this."

It was plainly evident that R. JOSEPH was impatiently awaiting what answer BEN-ONIE could render to such a "weighty" argument. R. AKIBA, on the contrary, was of a different mind. He knew but too well that a Christian is able to defend his standpoint, though his duty was to argue as he did.

"My dear friend," replied BEN-ONIE kindly, "It is perfectly true that the Kingdom of peace must be the result of the Messiah's advent. But where does the prophet teach that this Kingdom must follow the King immediately? Let us not lose sight of the proper character of prophecy. A prophet, according to the Old Testament definition, is one who looks into the future. The objects

(1) Isaiah IX: 6.

(2) Isaiah XI: 6.

(3) St. Matthew X: 34, 35.

he observes in a vision, look somewhat differently in reality. Take an illustration: Place yourself on a high mountain. Give a description of what you there behold. In the distance you see the city of A. and that of B. immediately behind. Thus it seems to you. However, traveling to the spot would reveal the fact that, while it is true that B. is situated behind A., yet there is quite a distance between the two cities which your eye failed to observe. Now bring this in relation to prophecy. The prophet looks into the future, that is: in the far distance (some 600 years). He sees the birth of the Messiah and, back of this, he perceives, as it were, a wolf and a lamb in peaceful harmony. He, of course, describes the beautiful panorama as it appears to him. We, however, who see it in reality, notice that the prophet was not mistaken, though there is a distance between the one and the other.

"And as for your remark," continued BEN-ONIE, "that the Founder of Christianity, according to his own declaration, has come to bring the sword,—I simply refer you to a passage of the prophet you commenced to quote: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."⁽¹⁾

"You see," interrupted R. JOSEPH, "he has his answer ready; though it is rather philosophy very little argument!"

"And yet not without force," replied R. AIKIBA; "yet I have a few more questions

(1) Isaiah XL: 6.

which you will be so kind as to answer."

R. AKIBA: "Do you, indeed, believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God?"

BEN-ONIE: "I do, sir."

"How impudent!" remarked R. JOSEPH."

R. AKIBA: "Is it possible that you can believe this? He was born as any other child, grew up as such, required the same things as all men and, finally, died like man."

BEN-ONIE: "The Church teaches that Jesus was truly human and truly divine; that the fulness of God was revealed in Christ."

R. AKIBA: "Is there no absurdity in the statement that God, whom the heavens cannot contain, should be comprehended in as small a space as the human form? Wonder what became of the government of the Universe? And how could he die? The divinity in him should have rendered this impossible."

BEN-ONIE: "This objection, my friend AKIBA, shakes the very foundation of Judaism. You and all Israel believe that God dwelled in the Temple, where he was worshiped, without ceasing to be the omniscient, omnipotent God. Likewise do I believe that the same God who, during the old Testament dispensation dwelled in the Temple, revealed Himself in the body of a man. God did not become man, nor man God, anymore than the Temple became God, or God the Temple. The human nature of the Messiah remained as it was, but became the tabernacle of God, just like the Temple before. And just as God permitted, on account of Israel's sins, that the Temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed, so He allowed the destruction of the temple of His body, for the

sin of Israel not only, but of the whole world."

R. AKIBA: "I must, indeed, confess that, with great ingenuity, you understand how to defend your position. As I presume that you will be able to do so in regard to every problem touching our dispute, it is my purpose with but one more question to close this argument, so far as I am concerned. Be, therefore, so kind as to prove that Jesus is a descendant of King David. It seems that even the Gospels are on that point not clear."

BEN-ONIE: "Your kindness and courtesy entitles you to a polite and cheerful reply to all your questions. Though somewhat of a perplexed character, yet I shall try to do so in regard to the last one which you proposed.

"If Jesus had not been generally recognized as the Son of David, how easy would it have been for his antagonists to put a stop to his claim? They knew, as well as the Jews of later date, whence the Messiah had to descend. The fact that they did not use such a powerful argument against his claim, is sufficient reason that they possessed none. Another proof for the generally acknowledged fact that Jesus was the Son of David is that, after the distribution of the Gospels, not a single expression in the Talmud, or any other book, either by Jews or Heathen, written during the first three centuries, is found, which protests against the royal claim of Jesus. On the contrary, the Talmud confirms, *nota bene!* confirms the fact. In a passage where Christ is mentioned at some length, we read: 'who is near to royalty,' by which is meant,

connected with the House of David.”⁽¹⁾

R. JOSEPH, to whom this sort of argument was simply intolerable, and who was not a little offended at R. AKIBA, on account of his gentlemanly behavior to BEN-ONIE and the attention he paid to what the latter said, arose and, with thundering voice, cried out: “We have not come hither to be taught, but to teach. If he be permitted to proceed, the result will be that he will conquer and we be conquered. With your permission, R. AKIBA, I shall resume the examination:”

R. JOSEPH: “It is written: ‘Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day.’ Why do you, as a Christian, disobey this commandment?”

As this was simply an argumentum ad captandam,⁽²⁾ BEN-ONIE answered: “In replying to this, I shall simply follow my Master’s example, who used to answer such questions by asking another.”

BEN-ONIE: “It is also written in the same commandment: ‘Thou shalt do no manner of work, thou and thy son and thy daughter, thy man-servant and thy maid-servant.’⁽³⁾ By what right, then, do you employ Christians to do your work on the Sabbath day?”

It need hardly be mentioned that this reply inflamed the passion of the pharisaic rabbi. He lifted up his hand, and brought it down on the table so vehemently that even R. BARUCH, who thusfar had been a patient listener, was surprised.

(1) רקריב למלכות הוא — Talmud Jerusalem, Tract. Sanhedrin, Fol. 43.

(2) An argument to ensnare.

(3) Exodus XX: 10

R. JOSEPH: "It is written again: 'The swine is unclean, of their flesh shall ye not eat.'⁽¹⁾ then why do ye eat it?"

BEN-ONIE: "It is also written: "Their carcass shall ye not touch, they are unclean to you ;'⁽²⁾ why then are the Jews permitted to drive through and kill the swine in Amsterdam, and elsewhere?"

The fierce anger of R. JOSEPH now knew no limit. He was conquered. He was wounded.

"An evil spirit," cried he, "an evil spirit, brought me to this place! I exhort you, R. BARUCH, to leave this dangerous room. This fellow—BEN-ONIE—is already so deeply fallen, that no hope for his salvation need be entertained any longer. Come with me, unfortunate father, in order that I may assist you in rending your clothes.⁽³⁾ As for your son, be he reckoned among Israel's enemies against whom we daily pray: 'Let slanderers have no hope, and all presumptuous apostates perish as in a moment!'"⁽⁴⁾

R. BARUCH begged to be excused from accompanying R. JOSEPH. He wished to remain a while longer to see, if, in a different way, he could not be more successful. Consequently having only saluted BEN-ONIE's father,

(1) Levit. XI: 7, 8.

(2) Levit. XI: 8.

(3) At the death of one of the seven nearest relatives, an Israelite rends his clothes and, sitting on the earth during seven days, separates himself from social life. The same ceremonies are observed when a Jew embraces another religion. BEN-ONIE's parents did not follow this custom.

(4) This imprecation is found in the prayer, called: (שְׁכֵנָה עֲשֶׂרָה) "Eighteen Sentences," which is read three times a day in the Synagogue. Maimonides calls this, and three more similar expressions, (see any Jewish prayer-book) a "prayer against renegades." (בְּרִכַּת לְשׁוּמְרִים) See R. Bechai fol. 51, and Buxtorf., Lexic. Thalm. in voce (שָׂמַד).

he went away, convinced, let us hope, that neither his tact, nor his temper justified him in continuing longer one of the professors in the Netherland-Israelitish-Seminary!

It seemed as if a better atmosphere pervaded the room when the bigoted teacher had departed.

R. BARUCH placed himself opposite his son, took his hand and looked at him with an eye, so full of sympathy and love that it was almost irresistible. He wished to speak, but his emotion prevented it. Besides, so much had been said already. BEN-ONIE, noticing the tears rolling down his father's cheeks, could not control himself. He arose and embraced his father who stammered: "My poor child, if anyone were to say, you must kneel before your son for a whole day, yea for a whole week, I would, together with your mother, do it most cheerfully, if we could persuade you not to betray your God, not to disgrace your parents who, on account of their advanced age, will not be able to survive this calamity!"

How crushing these words were to BEN-ONIE's heart, need hardly be mentioned. He feared no arguments, evaded no disputations, dreaded no insults - but to hear his beloved father utter such words; to see him shedding bitter tears, that required superhuman strength to bear. God alone could help him!

And help came. When his anguish had well nigh reached its climax, his heavenly Father, mercifully granted him assistance. Before he could speak, the door was opened and a messenger entered who, after depositing a letter

on the table, retired immediately. It was addressed to R. BARUCH. He took and opened it. Scarcely had he glanced over it, when the aged gentleman began to stagger, and would have fallen to the floor had not his son prevented it. Almost unconscious, the sorely-tried father leaned his head on the bosom of his intensely suffering son who, at that moment, trembling all over, knew not how and what to do!.....

“DEAR R. BARUCH:—Your son was baptized last night.
Your sympathizing, R. JOSEPH.”

“BEN-ONIE, does this letter contain the truth?” asked R. BARUCH.

“Yes, dear father, it does. Only forgive me that I did not at once inform you that I was baptized already. It was simply love to you that prevented it. I was anxious to spare your feelings as much as, under the circumstances, was possible. For God’s sake forgive me, my father!”

“Well, then, AKIBA, assist me to leave this room.”

“My father,” began BEN-ONIE, “you must permit me to speak one word more before you leave.”

“What is your desire, sir?” asked R. BARUCH, somewhat indignantly.

“Dear father, let me solemnly assure you that, after God, my parents are the nearest and dearest of what I most value on earth and, God knows that, if I could prolong their lives at the sacrifice of my own, I would cheerfully do it. Therefore, believe that I could do no

otherwise than I have done. To obey God above all, is the first fundamental duty. Had I disobeyed my heavenly Father, I would have been an unworthy Israelite, rightly deserving your displeasure. I know that the step I took has grieved you and my loving mother. Hence, my sufferings and agonies well nigh unto death! I rely, however, on your wisdom and fair judgment. I appeal to your common sense. A difference in opinion, in matters of faith, ought not to separate parents from their children. I, therefore, beseech you, don't sever the intimate connection between father and son, between mother and child. O my father, don't forsake me! Don't curse me, loving father! I cannot live, if you abandon me!"

This saying, BEN-ONIE fell on his knees before his father and wept sorely. R. BARUCH, however strictly Jewish, was not able to violate his parental feelings. He lifted up his son, pressed a kiss on his forehead and said:

"Son, before the world you have ceased to be our child. This is as unalterable, as the step, you have taken, is irreparable. But, I assure you, that this heart will beat for your happiness, till it will beat no more! I have always prayed to the God of my fathers for your welfare, and these lips, child, will continue to do so, until they will be silent in the grave! Let this suffice. Ask no more of your sorely afflicted father. And, if you will show that obedience to your father's command is yet a duty which you respect, then you will not come home, till we invite you. As for your broken-hearted mother she, as well as I,

pray for God's blessings to rest upon you. May He forgive you your sins and, in His time, restore you to the flock of Jeshurun from which you now so lamentably have wandered..... God is good! Blessed be He! The evil, which crushes us now, we have, no doubt, deserved. We shall try to submit to His holy will and pleasure. I praise the name of our God, who knows what is best for those who love Him. He alone is wise. He alone is merciful. Blessed is he, who listens to His voice!"

R. BARUCH had lifted up his eyes to heaven, in silent meditation, for a long time. The pious father had laid his complaints, his sorrows and his sufferings before Jehovah. His deeply distracted soul had sought comfort from the God of his Fathers! O, if that truly good and lofty man had been permitted to perceive what his Messiah had suffered for the world, and thus for R. BARUCH, too!.....If at that moment it had pleased God to reveal Himself, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to this pious Israelite!.....It would simply have been a gracious answer to the heartfelt prayer which was offered by BEN-ONIE who, in that trying hour, had some conception of St. PAUL's love for his people, when he said: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsman, according to the flesh, who are Israelites."⁽¹⁾

BEN-ONIE "wrestled with God!".....

R. AKIBA was wholly lost in tears.

(1) Rom. IX: 2, 3.

Was it, perhaps, at that solemn moment that Israel's God vouchsafed him a glimpse of the blessed Saviour whom he, five years later, preached in England's capital with so much love and fidelity, power and eloquence?⁽¹⁾

When R. BARUCH had recovered himself, he proposed to BEN-ONIE that he should accompany him a little distance. BEN-ONIE thanked his father for this privilege, and thus father and son walked slowly and silently on!

Having arrived at a certain terrace, R. BARUCH requested his son to return. They embrace each other. The father placed his hands on the head of his son and pronounced the priestly benediction. And thus, for the last time, BEN-ONIE received his father's blessing! Once again R. BARUCH pressed the hands of his son, lifted his tearful eyes to heaven, turned and went his way.

BEN-ONIE remained as fixed to the spot. He gazed long and yearningly after his father! Long after R. BARUCH had disappeared in the distance, his son stood as if buried in thought, unconscious of the blinding snowstorm which, in a few moments, had wrapped the city as in its winding-sheet!

When, finally, a gentleman, who had been looking at him for some time, very kindly offered himself to accompany BEN-ONIE home, he despairingly cried out:

(1) One year later R. Akiba was baptized by the Rev. Mr. Pauli, Missionary of the "London Society for the Propagation of Christianity among the Jews," at Amsterdam. Having studied theology in one of England's Universities, he was soon made a deacon by the late Bishop of London, Dr. Jackson, subsequently ordained priest and, before another year had passed, he entered the "rest, which remaineth for the people of God." He sleeps in the beautiful churchyard of C....., B.....shire, in close proximity to the Church. Eight years ago I said a prayer at his grave.

"O God, take my soul, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

Not till his arrival at the door of his room, had he noticed that the gentleman, who accompanied him, was the gentle R. AKIBA who, suddenly, disappeared in the dusk of the evening!

BEN-ONIE'S agonizing prayer was not granted. His work on earth was not yet finished. Other temptations he had to resist; more sorrows to bear; more battles to fight; more victories to gain—before he could look for the Crown of Glory!

Does it not seem as if the road to heaven is strewn with roses for some, planted with thistles for others? It is a problem, the solution of which is beyond man's limited knowledge. It is certainly the Redeemer's prerogative to lead his flock along the road which He Himself has trodden. Undoubtedly it is the way to Heaven, though it leads through Gethsemane and across Golgotha. It teaches this lesson: That only he who has wept in the former and suffered on the latter, can truly rejoice in Paradise. No one can wear the golden crown who has not worn the thorny crown! Fear not, weary pilgrim! The Master goes before! Simply keep your eye upon Him. Keep steadily on—step by step. Do not take long views, that you may not be discouraged. Only follow the Master, singing as you travel:

"Lead kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom :

Lead thou me on ;

The night is dark, and I am far from home,

Lead thou me on ;

Keep thou my feet ; I do not ask to see

The distant scene ; one step enough for me."

BEN-ONIE, SON OF SORROW.

(CONCLUDING CHAPTER.)

CHAPTER XII.

“Blest be thy passage o’er the changing sea
Of life; the c’ouds be few that intercept
The light of joy; the waves roll gently on
Beneath thy bark of hope, and bear thee safe
To meet in peace thine other Father,—God!”

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

It is evident from the title of this book, that it was never the intention of the author to give, within its limited space, a complete biography of BEN-ONIE. He, therefore, deems it expedient to omit what would be to the reader of little importance. As such he considers the long time which BEN-ONIE spent in the Universities; a time noted on account of the many hardships he had to endure, in obtaining the required means for study as well, as for his very existence. Still the darkness was not always without relief. It must be admitted that, with God’s assistance, he wonderfully worked his way through difficulties which often seemed to him insurmountable.

It is a pleasure to state here, that BEN-ONIE always experienced much kindness and good will among, both, professors and students. The former often refunded to him, privately, the large sums which attendance upon the lectures demanded, and the latter provided him not seldom with the necessary books, or the means to purchase them.

In due time he graduated at Utrecht, where he studied three years under the celebrated Dr. J. J. VAN OOSTERZEE, after a public defense of his treatise on "Hebrew literature and its influence on Christian theology;" and at Leiden after a similar defense of his dissertation "*De historia scholarum et academicarum Hebraiorum*" in connection with his *Grammatica Hebraica*."⁽¹⁾

When BEN-ONIE had completed his studies, he selected Leiden as his home. It was there that, by teaching the Oriental languages and the publication of several books, he obtained a decent livelihood. Had he only succeeded in reconciling his parents, he would have been perfectly satisfied. But, alas, all his efforts were in vain. Not a single answer came to the numerous letters he wrote. Even the venerable and devout professor, Dr. RUTGERS, who graciously tried to move BEN-ONIE's parents to sympathy for their son, whose health was in a precarious condition, was informed that "since the day BEN-ONIE had forsaken the Religion of his Fathers, he had practically ceased to exist!"

(1) "The history of the Hebrew Universities and scholars," in connection with his "Hebrew Grammar." Of this latter, a second edition has appeared lately.

It was on the tenth day of April, 1867 that NAOMI departed this life. Alas, the tender mother had yielded to deep and silent grief to such an extent that, finally, she had succumbed. It was said that, since BEN-ONIE's baptism, till the hour of her death, she was never known to smile! This was to BEN-ONIE a source of anguish which, for a long time, tortured his mind so keenly that, in the nightseason, his eyelids refused to close in sleep. It was, and is yet, the "thorn in the flesh" which, among other trials, will always remind him that with "many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom."

Scarcely one year had passed when, on the fifth day of March, 1868, the venerable and gentle Rabbi BARUCH followed his wife into the grave. The news-papers, which mentioned the fact eight days after the burial, were the only sources from which BEN-ONIE received the information of his father's, as well as of his mother's death. When the officer of the law, in the presence of the relatives, opened the envelope which contained R. BARUCH's will, he noticed that BEN-ONIE's name was not mentioned in the document. He had no share in the inheritance.⁽¹⁾

Of the sickness and death of his parents he was carefully kept in ignorance. He, therefore, was not privileged to follow their remains to the grave. They sleep in the cemetery belonging to the Synagogue of Leiden, on the shores

(1) I have good reason to know that the omission of BEN-ONIE's name in the "will," was the result of family intrigue. Neither R. BARUCH, nor his wife, ever intended to disinherit their son; the father was too conscientious, and the mother too tenderhearted to violate the voice of nature. The construction of the will was entrusted to a distant relative, and he was a Pharisee!

of the Rhine, only two miles from the waters of the North-sea. Repeatedly did BEN-ONIE request the authorities to permit him to drop a tear on his parents grave, but alas, alas, was peremptorily refused!

The Rev. Dr. S..... had left Holland to take the pulpit of a London church, vacated by the death of the pious RIDLEY HERSCHELL, D. D.

Was it a wonder that BEN-ONIE began to feel himself a stranger in his own country? that he began to realize the melancholy words of the French philosopher,⁽²⁾ that "true exile is not in being driven from one's country, but this: to be in one's own country, and to find there nothing for which to love it?"

It was in the autumn of 1868 that BEN-ONIE, exhausted in body and soul, lay prostrated on the sick-bed. The physician pronounced it a severe attack of typhoid fever, which brought him very near the gates of death.

Among the students who attended BEN-ONIE's instructions was one, who deeply sympathized with the Academical Lecturer. JOHANNES DE B..... was one of the ablest students of Leiden's University, and gave already then plain evidences that he was destined to be, one day, a Cabinet Minister, entrusted with the porte-folio of finance; an amiable youth of pleasing appearance and gentle manners but, alas, a skeptic, who, nevertheless, cheerfully offered his services to watch at BEN-ONIE's bedside, and to administer such comforts as would be required; an offer which was expected of those whose religious views coincided with

(2) Edgar Quinet.

those of the sick Lecturer, but which were only tendered, when they were no more required. Through the care of his kind physician and JOHAN's faithful attention, assisted by only one nurse, BEN-ONIE, after two months of patient suffering, recovered. He was, however, unable to resume his labor, on account of want of strength.

One day JOHAN entered BEN-ONIE's room and, having saluted him in his peculiarly cordial manner, said:

"Amice! I have examined the purses of some of my friends and found them too heavy, while yours is too light. I, therefore, kindly relieved them of the superfluous ballast and, here is the result," handing BEN-ONIE an envelope containing one hundred florins.

"Dear JOHAN—said BEN-ONIE, quite surprised—I am not aware that I have deserved your noble deed."

"Quid insania est⁽¹⁾—replied JOHAN—doesn't your Bible teach 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?' Believe me, were I in your condition, I would thank the good gods, if they would usher into my room a fellow, whose errand would be similar to mine."

"It is perfectly true, JOHAN, to help one another is a christian duty."

"A human duty, you mean!"—replied the student. But let us not argue about this. It is simply a different version!"

"JOHAN—said BEN-ONIE—I gratefully accept that money, provided, you permit me to present you, as a token of friendship, with this

(1) A quotation from Virgil: "What a folly."

book.⁽¹⁾ As I know that you are a great admirer of the Hebrew language, you will find this work of great value."

"Why, Amice—remarked JOHAN—that book, in its beautiful dress, exceeds in value the piece of paper I handed you. Never mind, BEN-ONIE, keep it, I know your heart."

"JOHAN—begged the Tutor—don't refuse me; it will remind you of your friend, when he is gone."

"Gone?—asked JOHAN—did WILLIAM offer you the vacant chair in Utrecht?"⁽²⁾

"O, no JOHAN—replied BEN-ONIE—I do not even expect it."

"You mean to say—remarked the Student—that you are not bigoted enough for Utrecht?"

"I am invited—explained BEN-ONIE—by the Society for Israel's conversion to visit a few cities, and to lecture on the Gospel for the benefit of the Jews."

JOHAN: "I see, they have engaged you to proselytize."

BEN-ONIE: "You are a little sarcastic, JOHAN!"

JOHAN: "Omnino; a difference in version only. But, appropos, have they provided you with the necessary pecunia?"

BEN-ONIE: "The Society will pay my traveling- and hotel-bills."

JOHAN: "Very liberal, indeed—tauntingly—I mean, however, the necessary cash to convert the Jews?"

(1) Ewald's Hebrew Sprache.

(2) The chair of Oriental Languages in Utrecht was vacant at that time. It was expected that the Curators of the University would present BEN ONIE's name to his Majesty, WILLIAM III, whose exclusive prerogative it is to appoint the Professors in the Universities, they being under the control of the government.

BEN-ONIE: "This remark is very severe indeed. JOHAN, we do not wish to buy Jews. We do not condescend to such mean measures; nor would the Jews listen to such low proposals!"

JOHAN: "Listen, Amice, I don't wish to hurt your feelings. Permit me, however, to express my opinion on this question. In the first place I think that a special mission for the Jews is superfluous. If a Jew desires to become a christian, he need only call on any minister who will be but too happy to prepare him. I know that, in time past, Missionaries have not hesitated to extend pecuniary aid to proselytes, if only to preserve the existence of the Society they were representing. And as for the Jews, I beg respectfully to submit that many would not consider it beneath them to accept a little gold in return for a little hypocrisy! Believe me, they could not resist the temptation. Besides, "*varietas delectat!*"⁽¹⁾ In fact, I believe that but few Jews are converted from pure motives, or lofty principles."⁽²⁾

BEN-ONIE: "Permit me to say, that you are treating the question entirely too superficially.

(1) A change is sometimes agreeable.

(2) This student was not the first, nor will he be the last, I fear, to make this remark, for which there never was, nor is there yet, sufficient ground. As a rule it is made by those who, like Mr. JOHAN DE B...., have no religious conviction; and because they have none, they imagine that others can have none. It is just as logical, as if one were to say, because a blind man cannot discriminate between colors, therefore no one else can!! There are hundreds of converted Israelites in our day, who have counted "every thing loss for the excellency which is in Jesus Christ," the Lord; and among them were, and are yet shining lights in the Christian church, both, in Europe and elsewhere. No less than one hundred and fifty baptized Israelites are to-day serving the Altar and preaching the Gospel in the Church of England. The blessings, derived from missions among the Jews are, thank God, many and manifold.

I do not admit that a special mission among Israel is superfluous. On the contrary, it is one of those missions which are demanded, and must be patronized by all conscientious christians. Of course, all depends on the ability of those who administer such a mission! As for the ministers themselves, it is a deplorable fact that most of them seem to care very little about the Jews. They patronize missions to even canibals, but to Israel they seem to be indifferent. They, very rarely, mention that ancient people in their prayers.⁽¹⁾ I cannot explain the reason of this lamentable neglect, but it is nevertheless a fact. Hence, others, who wish to obey Christ's implicit command,⁽²⁾ have established missions among the Jews, whose principal aim it is to preach the Gospel to them by means which are perfectly lawful, and in a way intelligible to the Israelites. These Societies have been more successful than any other.⁽³⁾ And as for your remark that not many Jews are converted from

(1) It must be admitted that there is one prayer in the "Book of Common Prayer" for the benefit of Israel, to be said on Good Friday. But, alas, in this prayer, Israel is mentioned in one breath with "Turks, Infidels and Heretics"!! Indeed, not very complimentary to the descendents of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, etc.; the Ancient People of God! Might not the Jews, in the language of the Talmud, say to the Church: *לא מרנשן ולא מעקצן* "Neither thy sting, nor thy honey?" We heartily recommend this to the revisers of the Prayer-book.

(2) St. Luke, XXIV: 47.

(3) It has been demonstrated that the mission among the Israelites, during the last fifty years, has been more successful than any other mission. Comparatively more Jews have been converted to the Church than Heathen! Beside, it must not be forgotten that, among the baptized Israelites, the church may count authors like Dr. NEANDER, THE Church Historian; and Dr. DELITSZCH, Dr. KEIL, Dr. THOLUCK, Dr. KRUMMACHER, Dr. DA COSTA, Scholar and Poet. Dr. CAPADOSE, Dr. SCHWARTZ, etc., etc. Can any one show such characters among the baptized Heathen of the last fifty years? One of the best, if not the best commentary on the Holy Scriptures now in existence is the work of Hebrew Christians—DELITSZCH and KEIL!

"pure and lofty principles—this is flatly contradicted by the history of the last fifty years, which shows that, among the ablest scholars, profoundest thinkers and best of men in England, Germany and Holland, not a few were Hebrew Christians, to whom, on account of their writings on every topic, not only the church, but the whole world is under everlasting obligation. That few, very few, are not faithful, is no argument against the mission. Not all Christians are faithful, and yet no one would contend that, on that account, the preaching of the Gospel should cease! Besides, JOHAN, let me remind you that the ill-treatment, which the converted Israelite, alas, too often receives from our hands, is greatly the cause of his deterioration—"bonus nequior fit ubi negligas."⁽¹⁾ I am sorry, JOHAN, that you and I differ so much in religious principles; a fact which compels me, to contradict you more than is agreeable to me. But you know "*est quatenus amicitiae dari venia possit.*"⁽²⁾

Amice—replied the Student—let us no longer quarrel about religion. You know my standpoint, which teaches me, that only then are we permitted to try to convert Jews and Heathen, if, by our works, we can plainly show that we are better, purer and holier than they. As for the rest, "*meus mihi suus cuique carus.*"⁽³⁾ I wish you a happy journey and, if in any way I can be of some use to you, command my services!"

Two days afterwards, BEN-ONIE left Leiden,

(1) A good man, being neglected, becomes discouraged.

(2) There is a limit how far even friendship may give way.

(3) Every one has his own taste.

and went to Rotterdam, where he began his labours, but which, after three weeks, he was compelled to abandon. The general state of his health did not permit him to undertake any extraordinary work. The death of his parents, and everything in connection therewith, had depressed his spirit; the want of sympathy of the Christians, and their prejudices against Israel, which they seem to imbibe with their mother's milk, and their indifference to BEN-ONIE's pure and independent christian character, completely disheartened him; and the cowardly revenge of those professors and doctors, whose rationalistic teachings against God's revelation were vehemently attacked by BEN-ONIE in lectures, letters, pamphlets and books,⁽¹⁾ so discouraged him, that he had to choose between leaving his native country, and seeking an early grave!

BEN-ONIE chose the former.

On a certain morning he went to his friend and said:

"JOHAN, I have resolved to leave my country."

The Student, being surprised, said: "No, sir, you are not going to leave your country and your friends. I have just made the necessary arrangements by which you and I can dwell together. I have rented a suit of rooms, large enough for you and me and, if you will

(1) "The Synagogue and Modern Thought in the Church;" "Dr. RENAN's Life of Christ criticised." Published at Amsterdam.

"The Holland Jew, his Religion and Morals;" a reply to Prof. Dr. GOLDSMITH, of Leiden, published at Amersfort.

"God glorified in Moses, David and Paul;" lectures (held in Leiden, Amsterdam and Rotterdam), antidotes to Prof. Dr. DOZŶ's: "The Israelites in Mekka;" published at Utrecht.

'Sepher Tehillim; "the Principal Doctrines of Christianity in the psalms. Apologetic; published at Amsterdam.

accept my hospitality, I shall be immensely happy."

"JOHAN, your friendship touches the very depth of my heart. It is balm to my wounded soul. It revives my drooping spirit. Would to God, I could express in words how I appreciate your kindness. But, JOHAN I cannot accept your offer, however noble and self sacrificing. I can no longer live in my country, where I have become a perfect stranger. Yet a little while and you will go to India,⁽¹⁾ and then I shall be left alone—fatherless, motherless, friendless, abandoned by my relatives, forgotten by some, misrepresented by others, forsaken by all! Tell me, what binds me longer to a country where I have hungered and thirsted, suffered and sorrowed till this very day? No, JOHAN, do not persuade me to remain here, where life becomes a burden to me. Let me go far away, where I shall not be so often reminded of the graves of my parents. Let me wander, wander alone. Who knows but the limit of my journey is nearer than you and I suppose. Ah, that would be a blessing to me, if it would please God to relieve me from the burden of this life: if..... but no, I must not proceed thus. The Lord knows what is best for me. If it be His pleasure that my cross be heavy—His will be done! To trust in Him, when the storms of life threaten to overthrow us; when not a single star illumines our solitary path—then to exclaim with the royal poet: "The Lord is with me, I shall not fear,"

(1) JOHAN was preparing himself to become a civil officer in East India.

that is the fundamental duty of a christian. I have once vowed in the most solemn manner, that I shall follow the Master—I shall try, God helping me, to be faithful. He, who has called me from darkness to light, will not forsake me. He will go with me. In Him I put my trust. JOHAN, one week from this day, I shall leave this country.”

After a few moments silence, JOHAN said: “If this be your last and irrevocable decision, it would ill-become me to make any objections. Go where you please, there will be room somewhere for an honest and upright heart. *Uibi bene, ibi patria!*⁽¹⁾ This, however, you must grant me as a special privilege that the few days, you are yet to be here, you will be my guest.”

“As soon as I shall have made the necessary arrangements for my journey, I shall give myself, both, the honor and pleasure of acting as you desire. Nothing will be more agreeable to me than to spend the last few days with you.”

While BEN-ONIE was busily engaged in making such preparations as were required to leave Holland, JOHAN made an effort to procure the means of relieving his friend from the anxieties which are inevitably connected with such circumstances. And in this he was successful. BEN-ONIE was popular among the Students. Hence, JOHAN’S work was, both, easy and pleasant. Nearly every Student contributed to the fund, which amounted to a goodly sum, which was calculated to be a great comfort, and

(1) The country, where one can provide for his wants, is his country.

for which he was under great obligation to JOHAN who, though a stranger to the doctrine of the Gospel, yet was no stranger to its spirit. Here, then, we have an other example of the fact, that a man's heart is often better than his mind. And that we are justified to value a man's real worth from the former, rather than from the latter, we may learn from the example of the Master who, in order to explain and illustrate true love towards man, preferred the heretical Samaritan to an orthodox priest and levite.⁽¹⁾

The 29th of May was appointed as the date when BEN-ONIE should leave the Netherlands. He was to go to England to be advised by the Rev. Dr. S.....as to his future. JOHAN would accompany him as far as Rotterdam. When he, late on the eve of that day, entered BEN-ONIE'S room, he found his friend in a deep sleep. For several minutes he gazed silently at that pale and emaciated face, on which the traces of sorrow were evident; notwithstanding a painful smile was playing around his lips. Though calm and peaceful outwardly, God alone knew what was going on inwardly. Finally JOHAN knelt down and stammered:

"This is, in all probability, the last night that you will sleep in this room, unfortunate friend. A few hours more, and we shall be for ever separated. Those who should have been your friends have murdered you, morally murdered you. Behold, an other illustration of Golgotha!.....But, what is the use of rowing against the stream? Why to climb the

(1) St. Luke, X: 30—37; see also chapter XVII: 18.

steepest hill? You should have accommodated yourself to existing circumstances! You should have followed the crowd! You should have done as the ignorant masses do!—But that was an absolute impossibility for one who has a great soul and a principle, for which he has sacrificed all that was near and dear and for which he lives and dies!—I have learned from you something—self-knowledge; one of the greatest treasures of a man's heart. How gladly would I keep you here. But it is folly to try to persuade a man who has a principle. We make ourselves ridiculous in his eyes. No, my friend, go where it pleases you. It is cruel to confine you to this house, this city, this country. You require room to extend your wings!”

A deep sigh followed this soliloquy. Subsequently he took BEN-ONIE's purse and put into it a small envelope, on which was written: “Don't open this till you are in England,” went to his own room and retired. He could, however, not sleep. There was a struggle in his soul to which, hitherto, he had been a stranger. In all his life he had not pondered on religion and greatness of soul, as much as he had done during the last few days. He could not deny that his heart was yet devoid of that peace in God, which characterized his friend amid all his sorrows. He could not but acknowledge that there is power in religion, satisfaction in a childlike confidence in God. And while meditating on this and similar thoughts, he at length yielded to nature's demands, and sank into a deep slumber.

Early in the morning the two friends sat down to breakfast. BEN-ONIE was calm, but JOHAN was agitated. After a long silence, JOHAN said: "This is the last hour, BEN-ONIE!"

"The last hour," responded the latter.

A carriage drove up to convey the two friends to the railway-station. When BEN-ONIE desired to pay for his ticket, JOHAN would not permit him, remarking that he was the treasurer, as long as they were together.

Being fully half an hour too early, they walked a short distance, when BEN-ONIE called his friend's attention to a small cloud, which was hovering above a little town, some five miles distant.

"JOHAN—said he, deeply touched—just beneath that cloud is the spot where once my cradle stood; where I was cherished by my mother and loved by my father; where I played with my brothers and sisters, and where I spent the first years of my life in innocence and happiness. If the recollection of those happy days awaken in me a feeling of deep sadness, yet, I assure you, that never, no never, did I feel a moment's uneasiness in consequence of the step, which has remunerated me, spiritually, thousand-fold the severe losses I sustained, when I gave my heart to Him, who alone has a right to claim it.⁽¹⁾ However weak in the body and insignificant in society I appear to-day—yet I am strong in spirit and of great importance in the Kingdom of Him, without whose will no sparrow will fall to the ground. I know in whom I believe. My Mas-

(1) Prov. XXIII : 26.

ter knows me. He will plead my cause. Though poor and sinful I am, yet He will never forsake me!—Farewell, spot, where first I saw the light of the sun,—place, once so dear to me! Farewell, my country, repository of the graves of a noble father, of a tender-loving mother! In love I shall ever remember, ever bless you! Farewell!".....

JOHAN had stood at BEN-ONIE'S side, listening silently and respectfully. He, indeed, admired his friend who, though brokenhearted, could bid farewell to all that was so dear to him, calmly and with perfect resignation to Him, "who governs all things in heaven and on earth." Certainly, that was the power of faith in God; the result of perfect belief in Christianity!—He could not deny it!

A few moments later the two friends entered the railway-carriage. Neither of them spoke. Each gave free course to the thoughts of his mind, to the feelings of his heart. When the train had arrived at Rotterdam, JOHAN ordered a cab, which brought them to the place where the London-steamer was making the last preparations for her passage. Only half an hour was required to complete them. When the moment of departure had come, BEN-ONIE embraced his friend and said: "JOHAN, may God reward you tenfold for the loving friendship, which you have so tenderly exhibited to me. In God's own time I shall receive a letter from you, which will cause me joy and gratitude, because it surely will indicate that our friendship can continue even there, where no sorrow shall mar our heavenly joy. Farewell,

JOHAN, my own dear friend, farewell!" And swiftly turning himself so as to hide his tears, he stepped on board of the magnificent vessel, which rapidly steamed seaward.

JOHAN stood on the pier and did not leave, till the steamer was altogether out of sight.

Within twenty-four hours BEN-ONIE arrived in London and went immediately to the residence of the Rev. Dr. S.....who received him with demonstrations of great joy, stating that he would offer him the hospitality of his house, as long as he wished to honor him with his presence. BEN-ONIE, however, was too ill to be the guest of a clergyman, whose family was large, whose visitors were many and whose duties were numerous. He desired rest, and this, he thought, he could obtain in a humbler place. Until he found it, he gratefully accepted Dr. S.'s offer, who spared no pains to impress BEN-ONIE with the thought, that in his family he was quite welcome.

In the meantime an advertisement in the parish-paper, for a suitable room, had procured several answers. Among them was one which attracted BEN-ONIE's particular attention. Assisted by a friend of Dr. S. he went to see, if this room would answer the purpose. Having arrived at the proper house, he entered, was conducted to the drawing-room and requested by the domestic to exercise patience till her mistress was informed of his presence. In a few seconds the door was opened and a lady of about twenty years, stood before him. Scarcely had she uttered the customary salutation, when she went backward and grasped

a chair so as to prevent herself from falling. She made an effort to speak, but could not. BEN-ONIE, seeing the poor woman's embarrassment, looked more attentively at her and, himself almost overcome by excitement, went forward, grasped her hand and exclaimed: "REBECCA! Can it be possible? Is this REBECCA?"

"Yes, dear sir, yes, I am REBECCA, and you are the kind Rabbi who stood at the death-bed of my grandmother and ornamented her grave with flowers. No, I am not mistaken, it is you—God be blessed for ever!"

Yes, REBECCA, it is I, who greatly owe to your sainted grandmother, what I am to-day—a christian, who knows that his "Redeemer liveth."

O, kind sir—remarked REBECCA—words cannot express my joy for the privilege of seeing you once more, to whom I am under so many obligations for the many blessings I have received through your instrumentality. God grant that I may now be permitted to show my gratitude."

To be grateful, REBECCA—said BEN-ONIE—is certainly man's first duty. But, if we compare the benefits which we both have received from our mutual acquaintance then, to be sure, my reason for gratitude to your grandmother will be far greater than yours to me. But, REBECCA, let us not talk about that just now. As you will notice, I am quite ill, completely exhausted. I look for rest, and hope to find it in your house, and under your care. If you think that you can assist me in this, I shall consider your indebtedness to me more

than paid; and, if it pleases God to restore me, I shall try to pay mine to you.

REBECCA signified that nothing would please her and her husband more than to welcome to her peaceful home him, who had been the indirect cause of her present and future happiness.

From that time BEN-ONIE lived in that quiet home where, by the united efforts of Rev. Dr. S.'s kindness, Dr. H.....'s well selected medicines and REBECCA'S indefatigable exertions and tender care, it pleased God, after four months of severe illness, to restore him so far that, finally, he was enabled to attend the lectures of Oxford's most celebrated professors; a desire which was always uppermost in his heart.

After the death of REBECCA'S grandmother, BEN-ONIE succeeded, with the assistance of a few friends of suffering humanity, in placing her in one of Amsterdam's excellent schools, where she was carefully educated and, on account of her meek and humble character, respected and beloved.

Four years later the Rev. C. W. H. PAULI,⁽¹⁾ favorably impressed with her talents and religious simplicity, desired her as governess. Having made application to the authorities of the school, and REBECCA being willing to accept the position, the request was granted, and thus she became, at the age of seventeen, a teacher in a family, where she was able to develop her talents and increase her abilities. Mr. PAULI, being of advanced age, became

(1) See page 155. Note 1.

emeritus and returned to London whence he came. REBECCA accompanied the family and, within two years, married the Principal of the Parish-schools of Sp....., an able and excellent christian gentleman.

In the course of time BEN-ONIE was made a Deacon and six months later ordained to the Priesthood of the Church of England. He became respectively curate of the Parish-church of Clifton, Bedfordshire; of St. Philip's; of St. Bartholemew and finally the Senior-curate of a Parish-church in the East of London.

The limited stipend of a curate, however, could not provide for the ever increasing wants of BEN-ONIE who, it must be remembered, was left penniless by his family. Not being able to satisfy the conventional demands of European society on a clergyman, he was advised to emigrate to the United States, where such demands were not made; where every one was regarded in the light of his intrinsic value, regardless of name or fame, of nationality or social quality, and where there was room for every one, who honestly desires to provide for himself and those committed to his care.

BEN-ONIE took this advice in earnest consideration. He consulted with his friends who, it must be admitted, were not very anxious that he should leave England.⁽¹⁾ However, with a view to his rapidly increasing

(1) Just before leaving England, the Rev. Harry Jones, Rector of "St. George's in-the-East," at the recommendation of the late Lord Bishop of London, offered BEN-ONIE the position of curate of his church, which is the most prominent one in the East of London. The official documents are yet in the possession of the author.

family, and the small chance of ever being able to procure an income adequate to their necessities, he had resolved to follow the advice, convinced that God, who had provided for him in Europe, would not forsake him in America.

Consequently, after several years of hard but useful labor in the vineyard of his Father, he left England, and went in November 1877 to the United States, where he now serves the Altar of the Lord, his God, preaches the Gospel of Salvation and, with his wife and eight young children, relies on Him who has promised that "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing!"

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be!"

APPENDIXES.

Ben-Onie's Letter demissary from the Church of England; a canonical document, signed by three beneficed clergymen and countersigned by the Bishop.

"We, whose names are hereunder written, testify and make known that Ben-Onie, in your Lordships diocese of London, has been personally known to us for the space of three years past; that we have had opportunity of observing his conduct; that during the whole of that time, we verily believe that he has lived piously, soberly and honestly. Nor have we at any time heard anything to the contrary thereof, nor hath he, at any time, as far as we know, or believe, held, written, or taught anything contrary to the doctrine, or discipline of the Church of England; and moreover, we believe him, in our conscience, to be, as to his moral conduct, a person worthy of christian consideration and brotherly love. In witness whereof, we have, hereunto, set our hands this 25th day of August, in the Year of our Lord 1800 and seventy-seven.

*SAMUEL BARDSLEY, M. A.,
Rector of Spitalfields and Rural Dean.*

*ANDREW KIRTON, B. A.
Vicar of St. Andrews B. G.*

*JOSEPH HARRISON,
Vicar of St. John's B. G.*

} London.

J. LONDON, (DR. JACKSON, Bishop of London.)

TESTIMONIALS.

(TWO OUT OF MANY.)

*From the Rev. Septimus Hansard, M. A., to the Rt. Reverend
the Bishops of the American Church.*

The Reverend Ben-Onie, D. D. is leaving England to settle in the United States, or in the Dominion of Canada. I beg to commend him to the Bishops and Clergy of the church as an earnest, able, and well instructed, and learned minister of Christ.....I am of opinion, he is in all respects superior to the average of clergymen, in learning and ability, with whom I come in contact, and far abler than most I reach, to see the bearing of the religious and theological questions, which have recently been brought prominently before the church, and to prevent their tendency to deadly error.

Ben-Onie is a sound and liberal churchman, and would, in my opinion, be most useful to a congregation of educated and cultivated people. To such he would minister with education and satisfaction. Faithfully yours,

*SEPTIMUS HANSARD, M. A.,
University College, Oxford, and Rector of Bethnal Green.*

The Rectory of B. G., Aug. 11, 1877.

From the Reverend J. D. McGachen, M. A.

I have great pleasure in bearing my testimony to the work and ability of Ben-Onie. I have known him as a Neighbour for nearly 18 months, and as my Colleague and Friend the last ten months, and we are only parting, because he has been advised that America will prove a more congenial sphere for

his labours. He has a singularly happy manner of making himself agreeable in his intercourse, and is ever ready and willing to lend his aid in all duties.

He is generous and openhearted, and has much simplicity of manners. He is gentlemanly in his bearing and conduct, and streightforward and honorable.

He would prove a valuable minister to an intelligent and liberal congregation, and would deal candidly and openly with his people. His sensitiveness and modesty will be his only hindrance, but his people would soon sympathise with him and support him. I wish him, and his wife and family, a happy home in his adopted country, and anticipate much good as the result of his labours.

J. D. McGACHEN, M. A.,

Pem. Coll. Oxford, Vicar of St. Bartholomew B. G. E.

St. Bartholomew's Vicarage, Sept. 1877.





